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NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* Dr. J. McMaster

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

George Eliot: the Technique of Unfolding Character from Within

by

© Matthias C. Njoku

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT ....English........

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled George Eliot: the Technique of Unfolding Character from Within

submitted by Matthias C. Njoku

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Juliet McMaster
Supervisor

R. J. Merrett

Ian Adam
External Examiner

Date January 6, 1977

ABSTRACT

The thesis is concerned with the process by which thought leads to action in the novels of George Eliot. It is divided into two sections. The first part is a description of the process by which the mind of a character isolates him in a miniature world or microcosm. Because of the way he thinks, the character is shown as an egoist, who is palpably ignorant of the claims of society on him. The assumptions that he makes bring mental and social conflicts, but through suffering and regeneration he attains moral consciousness and is reintegrated into society. The thesis demonstrates that every character in the fictional world of George Eliot, whether a prince or a sycophant, is necessarily an egoist; in addition, its discrimination of various qualities and attributes of the egoist clarifies the author's conception of egoism.

Since the task of the thesis is to show each major character in his own isolated world, the first part takes the form of a series of expository essays, each depicting minutely the process by which a world image is evolved in the mind of the character. This method involves the repetition of psychological patterns that occur in every novel. Although, because of the uniqueness of each mind, no two microcosms are ever the same, there are similarities in the ways in which they are created.

The second part answers the question raised in the first--why does the egoist's microcosm invariably collapse? The answer is that his attempt to create a self-centered little world is opposed to the moral principle on which society is founded. For George Eliot, the difference between the community of apes and that of man is morality. The human society is organized on a moral law which has evolved from the moral animal man. This law operates within and without the individual in the form of love, sympathy, memory, or social necessity. The egoist's attempt to create a microcosm for himself is an attempt to return to an amoral state of lawlessness. The effort fails because a man who has become morally conscious can never again return to a condition of total amorality. Once developed, morality becomes irrepressible, and forces man to recognise his kinship with man. Consequently, the moral law is always bringing characters together in spite of themselves. George Eliot's contention that art is a complex system of relations derives sanction from her conception of the moral law as a force that compels people to associate with one another.

List of Abbreviations

A.B.,	*Adam Bede*.
D.D.,	*Daniel Deronda*.
F.H.,	*Felix Holt*.
M.,	*Middlemarch.*
M.F.,	*The Mill on the Floss*.
R.,	*Romola*.
S.C.L.,	*Scenes of Clerical Life*.
S.M.,	*Silas Marner*.

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INTRODUCTION

In refusing John Blackwood's suggestion that the character of Caterina (in "Gilfil's Love Story") be modified to make her less affectionate to Captain Wybrow, George Eliot makes an important statement about her artistic technique: "I am unable to alter anything in relation to the delineation or development of character, as my stories always grow out of my psychological conception of the _dramatis_ _personae_."[1] The artist makes certain assumptions about his work and can only modify his creation within the limits of the rules which he has set for himself. George Eliot's commitment to the psychological method necessarily limits the degree to which she can control the actions of her characters, because, for her, a character is what he thinks and feels at any given moment. As soon as she creates the mind of a character and endows it with certain qualities, she restricts her task to tracing the "hidden pathways of feeling and thought which lead up to every moment of action" (_D.D._, xvi, Epigraph).

George Eliot's technique of depicting a character through what goes on in his mind is derived from her conception of the mind as the center of a system of relationships. Through sympathetic memory, the mind is always relating the character to his past, present, and future. But since the past, as well as the present, is made up of the knowledge which one gains from society, and since the future is only a deduction from this knowledge, it follows that man is irrevocably bound to society. Consequently, the mind is, not only a ganglion at which the character's past, present, and future meet simultaneously, but is also the central nerve of society. This deduction is very important in understanding George Eliot's psychological method. A recurrent motif in her novels--that man is at the center of a web of relations--is deduced from her concept of the mind and its function in society. A character cannot avoid relating to society any more than he can avoid relating to his own mind. Bulstrode, for instance, cannot avoid Raffles, because he cannot isolate himself from his memory. Harold Transome cannot dissociate himself from lawyer Jermyn without destroying the three-way relationship that exists between him, his father, and his mother. Walter Neumann correctly notes that the architecture of the novels of George Eliot does not serve to enhance the subject matter, but is intimately connected with it; form is not an artistic procedure or adornment, but part of the novelist's convictions.[2] When George Eliot says that "there is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life" (F.H.,iii), she is not only emphasizing the connection between man and his external world, but is also drawing attention to the intimate relationship between her artistic form and subject-matter.

George Eliot defines artistic form as "the relation of multiplex interdependent parts to a whole which is itself in the most varied and therefore the fullest relation to other wholes. . . . The highest Form, then, is the highest organism, that is to say, the most varied group of relations bound together in a wholeness which again has the most varied relations with other phenomena."[3] Art, as well as life, is made up of a number of relations, and the more the number of relations the more complex life and art become. Where there are less relations the artistic form is simpler. Middlemarch, for example, is more complex than Scenes of Clerical Life, because its characters are more numerous and more involved in a complicated form of relationships; where the relations are multiple, the problems that the mind has to deal with are proportionately multiplied. "My writing," says George Eliot, "is simply a set of experiments in Life."[4] For her, each new novel offers a fresh opportunity for a new and more complex form of relations. Her artistic achievement may be evaluated in terms of a progression from the simplicity of Scenes of Clerical Life to the complexity of Daniel Deronda.

But the progression from the simple to the complex is only the artist's way of assimilating the simple into the complex. A detailed observation of the simple prepares the artist for a more intelligent perception of the complex. For the author, the role of the artist, like that of the scientist, is to search for a "unity which shall bind the smallest things with the greatest. There is nothing petty to the mind that has a large vision of relations, and to which every single object suggests a vast sum of conditions" (M.F., Bk.iv,i). The artist-psychologist must never be satisfied with simplifications. In "Janet's Repentance," George Eliot ridicules the "facial psychology which prejudges individuals by means of formulae and casts them into lettered pigeon-holes" (viii). The true artist must be capable of an "intuitive perception of the varied states of which the human mind is susceptible, with ability to give them out anew in intensified expression."[5] In other words, he must be capable of an empathic relationship with the mind that he depicts. Such relationship is necessary if the artist is to achieve in art the complexity which exists in real life. George Eliot's concern "with the process, the shifts in perspective, the shaping incidents, the development of consciousness that lead up to the character's choice"[6] is an attempt to place art in an analogous relationship with life.

Although contemporary, as well as modern, critics have shown that George Eliot was one of the earliest writers to develop and make use of the psychological method,[7] no one, as far as I know, has demonstrated how the author consistently applies this technique to all her novels. My own contribution is simply to show how the author threads the "hidden pathways of feeling and thought which lead up to every moment of action," in all her novels, and to relate what goes on in the minds of her characters to her conception of the artistic form.

For the purpose of analysis, the thesis will be divided into two parts: the egoists' worlds and moral dynamics. In the first part each novel will be analyzed to show that because of the nature of the mind, an egoistic impulse exists in every character, and that by the assumptions and choices that he makes, the character consciously or unconsciously creates a self-centred microcosm which disturbs the web of relations so necessary for the survival of the individual and of his society. However, through suffering and experience, the egoist is regenerated and becomes reconciled to the moral order that is both within and without him. This brings us to the second part of the thesis. Moral dynamics supplies the current of feeling which, in George Eliot, is used for the subtle discrimination of characters. Without the force of moral dynamics, it will be difficult to differentiate a

Dorothea Brooke from a Rosamond Vincy or a Felix Holt from a Harold Transome. The moral force is simultaneously within and without the individual. Within the character, it is responsible for the complex, associative patterns which relate the character to his past, present, and future. As a social force, it is always bringing people together through the sympathetic feeling which is innate in man. Through an understanding of the law of moral dynamics, the reader will be in a better position to appreciate George Eliot's conception of life and art as a complex system of relations, and to understand why the egoist never completely succeeds in isolating himself in a narrow microcosm.

PART I: Chapter 1

A Universe of Miniature Worlds

For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heav'n move,
and fountains flow.
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure.
The whole is either our cupboard of
food
Or cabinet of pleasure.[1]

The character has internalizing and externalizing traits which are often at conflict with each other: the one tends to make him self-centered, the other to make him altruistic. For this reason every character in George Eliot is simultaneously selfish and altruistic. "But where is not this same ego?" George Eliot asks. "The martyr at the stake seeks its gratification as much as the court sycophant, the difference lying in the comparative dignity and beauty of the two egos."[2] Elsewhere, she says that

> "We are all islands--
> 'Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
> Our hermit spirits dwell and roam apart.'"[3]

The selfish element makes a character to imagine himself the center or the purpose of creation, and because of the way he thinks, the egoist unconsciously isolates himself in a narrow microcosm in which nothing matters, but his own desires. But if the soil of his mind has more of the altruistic elements than of the egoistic, he gradually emancipates himself from his ego and becomes conscious of the external world that exists outside himself.

The contrasting qualities of the internalizing and externalizing traits are illustrated in a parable which George Eliot entitles "A Little Fable with a Great Moral."[4] It is the story of two hamadryads, Idione and Hieria, who lived by a lake. Idione saw the lake as existing solely to reflect her beautiful image, while to Hieria, the water reflected the splendour of the firmament.[5] Barbara Hardy rightly points out that the moral and the pattern of this story lie at the heart of George Eliot's books.[6] There is, however, a tendency in Barbara Hardy to overemphasize the contrast which Idione makes with Hieria. Committed to the view that George Eliot's "characters are sheep or goats, or shown as becoming sheep or goats,"[7] she logically assigns Idione and Hieria to separate compartments, and cannot see them as two possible aspects of the same mind. While it is true that unregenerate Idiones abound in the fictional worlds of George Eliot, the nearest correspondence to a perfect Hieria is Daniel Deronda who is not one of her most successful creations. George Eliot achieves complexity by what she calls "iridescence"[8] or a mixture of the traits of Hieria and Idione. Virtually all her characters begin life as Idiones, "born in moral stupidity and taking the world as an udder to feed [their] supreme selves" (M.,xxi). But the good character eventually modulates into a Hieria, which is the altruistic self, while the chronic Idione remains morally stunted and unregenerate.

The point which I am trying to make is that the character's conflict is generated from within as a result of the difference which exists between the exclusively subjective, ego-centric world evolved in his mind and the objective world that exists outside his mind; in this essay the objective world is synonymous with the moral universe, which is explained elsewhere.

Scenes of Clerical Life

Although the actors in Scenes of Clerical Life are nourished by the same environment, the same religion, and the same culture, their fortunes differ. This is because the character creates a world after his own fancy, and because a moral distance exists between the microcosm thus created and the real world. The real world is not that of the immediate environment of the character, but a historically evolved moral universe which envelops individuals as well as communities. Each fictional cosmos of George Eliot postulates three interacting worlds: the world of the character, the world of his community, and the historical moral world. This discrimination of worlds is a useful starting point in any study of form and meaning in George Eliot, particularly in view of the fact that many critics confuse a character's environment with his objective moral world.[9] The community of Scenes of Clerical Life, for instance, is in antagonistic relationships with both the main characters and the historical universe, hence the necessity of reconciling mediators who would restore the community to normality. Thus the environment is as much in need of salvation as the character.

"Amos Barton"

The image of the Rev Amos Barton with which every student of George Eliot is familiar is that of an absolute mediocrity: "a man whose virtues were not heroic, and who had no undetected crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging about him but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace" (v).[10] An ironic description such as this can easily mislead the unwary reader. Amos may not be the hero of a romance novel, but nothing in the world of realism bars him from becoming a hero. Even if we agree with the conclusions of the narrator that neither his emotions nor his actions were heroic, can we deny that he had heroic dreams? "Rev Amos Barton," we are told, "was one of those men who have a decided will and opinion of their own, he held himself bolt upright, and had no self-distrust" (ii). In fact, the reverend gentleman is represented in the novel as a dreaming egoist. His "other-worldliness" is not a sham, as U.C. Knoepflmacher would have it,[11] but an unconscious act of self-importance. The drama of "Amos Barton" is centered on a harsh, intolerant theology, expounded by Amos for selfish ends.

It is easy to perceive the process by which the mind of the curate evolves its theological microcosm. There is first his education which alters his reasons for the worse:

> "I never see the like to parsons," Mr Hackit said one day in conversation with his brother church-warden, Mr Bond, "they're al'ys for meddlin' wi' business, an' they know no more about it than my black filly."
> "Ah," said Mr Bond, "they're too high learnt to have much common-sense."
> "Well," remarked Mr Hackit, in a modest and dubious tone, as if throwing out a hypothesis which might be considered bold, "I should say that's a bad sort o' eddication as makes folks onreasonable." (v)

The judgment of his parishioners is confirmed by the curate himself, who instead of making efforts to improve his image, withdraws into himself, reflecting that he "held high opinions a little too far-sighted and profound to be crudely and suddenly communicated to ordinary minds" (ii). Out of his theology he has thus fashioned a world that gives significance to his supreme ego. The narrator correctly reads his mind as he stands on the brink of fortune ready to plunge into the ministry: "the religious life of Shepperton was falling back towards low-water mark. Here you perceive was a terrible stronghold of Satan: and you may pity the Rev Amos Barton, who had to stand single handed and summon it to surrender" (ii). No wonder he fancies himself a crusading St Michael engaged in a perpetual warfare with the devil, disguised as his congregation:

> "I was quite determined that the old set of singers should be dismissed. I had given orders that they should not sing the wedding psalm, as they call it, again to make a new-married couple look ridiculous, and they sang it in defiance of me. I could put them into the ecclesiastical court, if I chose for to do so, for lifting up their voices in church in opposition to the clergyman." (iii)

The clergyman is unconsciously equating himself with a militant deity, and his speech, with its numerous stressed "I's", recalls the unyielding egoism which characterizes his actions. He obstinately carries out the building of a new church, in spite of a dwindling congregation; he delivers sermons that can be published in the prestigious *Pulpit*, although they have no relevance for his audience. It is his actions that create tensions between him and a public that is equally ignorant and self-centered.

Another consequence of his assumptions is imperviousness to criticisms. He is amused when a parishioner expresses dissatisfaction with his setting of a tune: "Here Mr Barton laughed--he had a way of laughing at criticisms that other people thought damaging" (ii). However, in spite of his strong will and defiant confidence in himself, he is very much open to the flatteries of the so-called countess Czerlaski. U.C. Knoepflmacher thinks that Rev Amos is attracted to the countess "in order to shield himself from his natural imperfections by clinging to the illusion of his importance as a divine."[12] I think that he goes to her for precisely the opposite reason--in her flatteries, he finds fulfilment for his dream world. Amos is not conscious of any "imperfections" on his part; hence he accepts the eulogies of the scheming countess on their face value. She offers him the world of his fancy, in which his aristocratic merits are recognised and rewarded, where his uncharitable desire to punish infidels receives divine sanction:

> She talked of Tractarianism, of her determination not to re-enter the vortex of fashionable life, and of her anxiety to see him in a sphere large enough for his talents. . . the Rev Amos had a vague consciousness that he had risen into aristocratic life, and only associated with his middle class parishioners in a pastoral and parenthetic manner. (v)

Elsewhere, she encourages his penchant for punishment: "indeed you are too patient and forbearing, Mr Barton. For my part I lose my temper when I see how far you are from being appreciated in that miserable Shepperton" (iii).

Unlike the naive curate, Countess Czerlaski is a conscious egoist who purports to become religious when her mundane desires have been satisfied: "She had serious intentions of becoming *quite* pious--without any reserves--

when she had once got her marriage and settlement." Apropos of her desire the narrator comments wryly, "Only this little bit of pretence and vanity, and then I will be quite good, and make myself quite safe for another world" (iv). To this idea, she resigns her faculties for common-sense and human sympathy. A perfect Idione, she sees in the mirror of the world only her own image: "there was one being to whom the countess was absorbingly devoted, and to whose desires she made everything else subservient--namely, Caroline Czerlaski" (iv). However, her conscious egoism functions in the novel only to dramatize Rev Barton's unconscious desires by giving them comic fulfilment.

The final, and by far the most devastating, effect of Amos's misconceived world is the desiccation of his meagre emotional reserve. A man of limited sensibility can become so obsessed with a single object that he loses sight of other interests that make life worth living. Rev Barton's subservience to a theological world that is centered on himself absorbs his little rill of emotion so completely that he has become insensitive to the little acts of humanity that are the balm of life. His response to poor Mrs Brick's desire for tobacco is characteristic of his insensitvity to the minor necessities of life:

> "So your snuff is all gone, eh?"
>
> Mrs Brick's eyes twinkled with the visionary hope that the parson might be intending to replenish her box, at least mediately, through the present of a small copper.

> "Ah, well! you'll soon be going where there is no more snuff. You'll be in need of mercy then. You must remember that you may have to seek for mercy and not find it, just as you're seeking for snuff."
>
> At the first sentence of this admonition, the twinkle subsided from Mrs Brick's eyes. The lid of her box went "click!" and her heart was shut up at the same moment. (ii)

Ironically, the reverend gentleman's other-worldliness does not extend to the "good stiff glass o' brandy-and-water," which he enjoys at the homes of his wealthier parishioners after his cottage preaching. Yet, his admonition to Mrs Brick is not a conscious act of hypocrisy, but a sincere reaction of a mind bereaved of imagination and feeling. His clumsy unimaginativeness is contrasted, in the novel, with the practical humanism of his non-doctrinal predecessor Rev Gilfil, who offered sugar-plums to the poor instead of hard-boiled theology.

His most glaring flaw, however, is his complete insensitivity to the love of the self-effacing Milly, a love which makes home livable, in spite of economic difficulties. Convinced that sermonizing is the the only worthwhile effort, he finds no reason to sympathize with those engaged in the less honourable chores which provide for domestic comfort and ease:

> Mrs Barton heard him open the door, and ran out of the sitting room to meet him.
>
> "I'm afraid your feet are very wet, dear. What a terrible morning! Let me take your hat. Your slippers are at the fire."
>
> Mr Barton was feeling a little cold and cross. It is difficult, when you have been

> doing disagreeable duties, without praise, on a snowy day, to attend to the very minor morals. So he showed no recognition of Milly's attentions, but simply said, "Fetch me my dressing gown, will you?" (ii)

He is not sensitive enough to see a relationship between his success in his profession and domestic felicity. Such insensitivity is a cardinal sin in George Eliot. The ironic tone of the narrator's commentary shows that emotional and moral distances exist between Amos and the narrator. To George Eliot and many Victorians, domestic happiness is the cradle of civilization; hence the curate's lack of sympathetic feeling cuts at the root of society.[13] His emotional life needs a traumatic experience such as Milly's death to shock it out of its torpor.

Milly's protracted death scene has attracted much hostile criticism. Some critics, following the example of Joan Bennett, find it to be morbidly sentimental.[14] But I share Thomas Noble's very intelligent view that Milly's death scene is consistent with her role in "Amos Barton" and that this role cannot be said to be sentimental:

> A sincere sensibility degenerates into sentimentality when death is dragged into the plot of a story simply for sensation; or when we put our reactions to the fact of death above the fact itself and, losing sight of the significance of the death, concentrate solely on our feelings about it; or when the presentation of it is unnatural. . . . The pathos here escapes sentimentality because the sentiment has been so fully prepared for in the depiction of Milly's character. . . The sense of love and security which emanates from Milly's presence in the story gives truth to the pathos that is engendered in her loss.[15]

Milly is not conceived as a real character, but as a perfect Hieria, a "gentle Madonna dispensing the unspeakable charm of gentle womanhood! which supercedes all acquisitions, all accomplishments" (ii). She is the incarnation of nature perfected and is invoked as a regenerating agent. George Eliot uses what is noblest in nature to recondition the unhinged, unregenerate mind and to restore it to humanity. Milly is to Amos Barton what Eppie would later become to Silas Marner. Amos alienates himself from his own Hieria or better nature by adopting his mind to an inhuman world or a harsh abstract theology which ultimately destroys both his reason and human sentiments. Unlike Silas Marner, he is insensitive to the gentle therapy of beauty and love. Only the sudden deprivation of his hitherto unacknowledged source of comfort could touch his hardened feelings. Returning from Milly's funeral, he finds home, without his wife, dreary:

> The burial was over, and Amos turned with his children to re-enter the house--the house where, an hour ago, Milly's dear body lay, where the windows were half darkened, and sorrow seemed to have a hallowed precinct for itself, shut out from the world. But now she was gone; the broad snow-reflected day light was in all the rooms; the vicarage again seemed part of the common working-day world, and Amos, for the first time, felt that he was alone. (ix)

As Barbara Hardy correctly points out, the "disenchanted day-lit room" is one of the important recurring scenes of crises in the works of George Eliot.[16] The author derived this image from a personal experience which she described in a letter to Sara Hennell: "Alas for the fate of poor mortals which condemns them to wake up some fine morning and find all the poetry in which their world was bathed only the evening before utterly gone--the hard angular world of chairs and tables and looking glasses staring at them in all its naked prose."[17] The image functions to disabuse one of one's illusions, as Janet Dempster (in "Janet's Repentance") discovers after her disenchantment: "the daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as everything else" (xvi).[18] The dark unreal world which the egoistic mind fashions for itself is dispersed by the glaring light of the day. The light is dreary because it harbours no illusory shades.

The death of Milly is the ironical turning point in the affairs of Shepperton and of its curate. It softens the hardened minds of the parishioners, calling out "their better sympathies" which are always the "source of love" (x). And love, in George Eliot, is the most effective regenerating agent. But the more significant gain is that sorrow revives in the curate the current of feeling which has been desiccated by a harsh theology. Before he leaves Shepperton, he goes on a pilgrimage to the grave of his wife, where he makes an open confession:

> "Milly, Milly, dost thou hear me? I didn't love thee enough--I wasn't tender enough to thee--but I think of it all now."

> The sobs came and choked his utterance,
> and the warm tears fell. (x)

The "warm tears" which force open his blocked emotional outlet contrast with his cold theology that shuts off the floodgates of love. The above scene is certainly one of recognition. Through his revived feeling of love, he emancipates himself from his Idione, and can gradually move towards his better self or Hieria.

"Mr Gilfil's Love-Story"

The drama of "Amos Barton" is concentrated on the life and death struggles of a single man, but that of "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" shows the more complex conflicts of four mutually exclusive microcosms. Cheverel Manor symbolizes Sir Christopher Cheverel's egoism. The baronet, who proudly announces how remarkable it is that he never in his "life laid a plan and failed to carry it out" (xiii), thinks that he can fashion human beings just as he fashions Gothic Manors. His Gothic building is not the imperfect structure celebrating the free humanity of so many rude labourers,[19] but a splendid mansion manifesting his "unswerving architectural purpose," fervent "genius" as well as "inflexibility of will" (iv). His mind moves only in one plane, and like Amos Barton, he unconsciously plays the role of God, assuming that everyone ought to fit into his preconceived plans. He expels his elder sister from Cheverel Manor for daring to disagree with him, and in order to make the expulsion irrevocable, adopts Anthony Wybrow as the heir of the Manor. He installs Maynard Gilfil as chaplain, not for genuine religious reasons, but because the reverend gentleman is a companionable ward and because he liked the "old-fashioned dignity of that domestic appendage"--the chaplaincy. Caterina is brought up at Cheverel, not as daughter but as a "protegee" to be ultimately "useful, perhaps, in sorting worsteds, keeping accounts, reading aloud, and otherwise supplying the place of spectacles when her ladyship's eyes should wax dim" (iii). He is much too full of himself to notice that others too have their own separate worlds outside his conceptions. The tragedy that befalls Cheverel carries a terrible nemesis, for while the baronet is boasting of the success of his dreams comes the terrible news which forces consciousness on him:

> "I lay my plans well, and I never swerve from them--that's it. A strong will is the only magic. And next to striking out one's plans the pleasantest thing in the world is to see them well accomplished. This year, now, will be the happiest of my life. . . Anthony's marriage--the thing I had nearest my heart--is settled to my entire satisfaction. . ."
>
> The door burst open, and Caterina, ghastly and panting, her eyes distended with terror, rushed in, threw her arms around Sir Christopher's neck and gasping out--"Anthony. . .the rookery. . .dead. . .in the rookery," fell fainting on the floor. (xiv)

The structure of "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" is based on a parallel system of relationships between Cheverel Manor and its inmates. Captain Anthony Wybrow accepts its superficial values because they flatter his indolent ego. It is the great irony of the story that the lazy, dilatory Wybrow identifies himself with the energetic Sir Christopher.[20] This identification is, however, an unconscious projection of his ego. Born to be an inheritor, he confidently assumes that Cheverel and its inmates exist for his convenience. Caterina is a pleasant pastime, a pet singing bird to be seduced without any moral compunction; Gilfil is created to take care of Caterina when he is done with her; Sir Christopher's function is to provide a suitable excuse for his actions. "Are you angry with me for what a hard fate puts upon me?" he asks Caterina. "Would you have me cross my uncle--in his dearest wish? You know I have duties--before which feeling must be sacrificed" (ii).

His hypocrisy is a result of habitual indolence--his dominant character trait. The native soil of his mind seems to be of the clayey type; hence his emotion and intellect are effectively clogged in the cloyingly rich surroundings of Cheverel court. Thomas Noble is dissatisfied with Wybrow and complains that "instead of character analysis or dramatic presentation of personality we are crudely given thoughts intended to be revealing."[21] The critic, seems to miss George Eliot's intention, which R.H. Hutton admirably sums up in a review in the Spectator: "What her characters do is always subordinate with her to what they are. This is the highest artistic power, but it carries its inconveniences with it."[22] Hutton's observation is relevant to the major tenet of this essay; that the character's world emanates from his thoughts, hence his action or inaction is relative to the disposition of his mind. Anthony may not entertain the reader with the glamour of a continuous activity, but his mind reveals more of the human situation than many an active character. However, the captain is physically inactive, not because he thinks but because his thoughts and emotions have become impotent from natural and acquired habits of indolence which he euphemistically calls duty. There is a peculiar tepid sluggishness in his response to life. Things are done to him; he never initiates actions. Being a youth of "calm passions" who thinks that he always acts from a "sense of duty," he finds himself adored by "a little, graceful, dark-eyed, sweet-singing" Caterina. He finds her love an "agreeable sensation, comparable to smoking the finest Latakia," which "imposes some return of tenderness as a duty." His actions, so far as they can be called actions, are rooted similarly in indolence:

> "Captain Wybrow always did the thing easiest and most agreeable to him from a sense of duty; he dressed expensively, because it was a duty he owed to his position; from a sense of duty he adapted himself to Sir Christopher's inflexible will, which it would have been troublesome as well as useless to resist, and being of a delicate constitution, he took care of his health from a sense of duty. (iv)

Like Idione he recedes into himself to compensate for his ethical inadequacy. The distance between his narcissistic world and the ethical universe that surrounds him is farthest when he is confronted with a moral dilemma:

> That evening Captain Wybrow, returning from a long ride with Miss Assher, went up to his dressing room and seated himself with an air of considerable lassitude before his mirror. . .
>
> "It's a devil of a position this for a man to be in," was the train of his thought, as he kept his eyes fixed on the glass, . . . "between two jealous women, and both of them as ready to take fire as tinder. . . I should be glad enough to run away from the whole affair, and go off to some lotos eating place or other where there are no women, or only women who are too sleepy to be jealous. Poor little Tina! What a little simpleton it was, to set her heart on me in that way! But she ought to see how impossible it is that things should be different." (x)

The scene emphasizes the impossibility of consciousness for a mind too indolent to accept responsibility for its actions. The only outlet for such a mind is death, because it can never successfully elude moral responsibilities.

But Caterina is presented as an organic contrast with Cheverel:

> While Cheverel Manor was growing from ugliness into beauty, Caterina too was growing from a little yellow bantling into a whiter maiden, with no positive beauty indeed, but with a certain light airy grace, which, with her large appealing dark eyes, and a voice that, in its low-toned tenderness, recalled the love-notes of the stockdove, gave her a more than usual charm. Unlike the building, however, Caterina's development was the result of no systematic or careful appliances. She grew up very much like the primroses, which the gardener is not sorry to see within his enclosure, but takes no pains to cultivate. : . (iv)

Caterina's imperfect education is contrasted with the perfection of the Gothic structure. She is, in fact, the very incarnation of wild, although unobtrusive, nature growing alongside of the artistic man-made manor. Her kinship with the world of untamed nature is accentuated throughout the story by the repeated animal and plant imagery--stock-dove, Blenheim spaniel, black-eyed monkey, primrose--with which she is associated. She is presented as a foil to Sir Christopher's sophisticated thoughts which have no sympathy for the world of simple naked nature. She soon accepts her position as the pet of the manor and forms her little world on her unrealistic experience. Her knowledge is, of course, inadequate and only makes her unfit for "an encounter with any harder experience" (v). Ill-disciplined and wild, her passion quickly masters her and she banishes reason and reality from her microcosm. Emotion is good, but emotion from which the intellect is banished is dangerous. Caterina resents any feeling or reason which fails to support her wishes; passion makes her absurdly self-centered and conceited:

> She was too much irritated by the idea that his wishes were different from hers, that he rather regretted the folly of her hopes than the probability of their disappointment, to take any comfort in his sympathy. Caterina, like the rest of us, turned away from sympathy which she suspected to be mingled with criticism, as the child turns away from the sweetmeat in which it suspects imperceptible medicine. (ii)

What religion did for Amos Barton, passion does for Caterina. In each case, a single faculty is developed to the detriment of all others. "To Caterina," the narrator says, "thought is a fleeting shadow cast by feeling; words are facts, and even when known to be false, have a mastery over her smiles and tears" (vii). The irony of her situation is that she consciously avoids consciousness in order to stretch the momentary joy that her illusion brings. "He _did_ care for me; he did love me; only he wanted to do what his uncle wished," she insists. But Gilfil observes ironically, "Oh to be sure! I know it is only from the most virtuous motives that he does what is convenient to himself" (ix).

Preoccupation with a single passion surfeits a character in his own excesses. Caterina is frightened at her monomaniacal propensities when she shouts, "Oh, if I would but like anything--if I could but think about anything else! If these dreadful feelings would go away, I wouldn't mind about not being happy" (xi). She is tantalized by a dim vision of some quiet life that is free from the bondage of emotions. But her rational power is not strong enough, and the more she tries to escape from herself, the more she is tormented. Her agitated passion, like King Lear's, is as turbulent as harsh unsympathetic, stormy weather:

> Caterina drew aside the window-curtain; and,

> sitting with her forehead pressed against the cold pane, looked out on the wide stretch of park and lawn.
>
> How dreary the moonlight is! robbed of its tenderness and repose by the hard driving wind. The trees are harassed by that tossing motion, when they would like to be at rest; the shivering grass makes her quake with sympathetic cold; and the willows by the pool, bent low and white under that invisible harshness, seem agitated and helpless like herself. But she loves the scene the better for its sadness: there is some pity in it. It is not like that hard, unfeeling happiness of lovers, flaunting in the eyes of misery.
>
> She set her teeth tight against the window-frame and the tears fell thick and fast. She was so thankful she could cry, for the mad passion she had felt when her eyes were dry frightened her. (v)

The images of coldness in this scene show how much she longs for that calm soothing vapour of contentedness which hot passion denies to her narrow world. To a less emotional nature disenchantment ought to have carried with it the seeds of knowledge and recognition, instead of insinuating self-pity. Unrelieved absorption in oneself often leads, in George Eliot, to broodings of suicide or murder. Hetty Sorrel contemplates suicide, while Gwendolen and Caterina nurture homicidal thoughts. Caterina's mind at the moment of her murderous sensations is a vibrating fire-brand that charts its course with a desperate energy:

> She rushes noiselessly, like a pale meteor, along the passages and up the gallery stairs! Those gleaming eyes, those bloodless lips, that swift, silent tread, make her look like the incarnation of a fierce purpose, rather than a woman. The mid-day sun is shining on the armour in the gallery, making mimic suns on bossed sword hilts and the angles of polished

> breast plates. Yes, there are sharp weapons in the gallery, there is a dagger in that cabinet; she knows it well. And as a dragon-fly wheels in its flight to alight for an instant on a leaf, she darts to the cabinet, takes out the dagger and thrusts it into her pocket . . . Her heart throbs as if it would burst her bosom--as if every next leap must be its last. Wait, wait, O heart!--till she has done this one deed. He will be there. . . She will plunge the dagger into his heart.(xiii)

This is a picture of Caterina. Her head is in her heart; she cannot contemplate her actions; she vibrates them. George Eliot refuses John Blackwood's suggestion to modify Caterina's character by making her "a little less openly devoted to Wybrow: and by "giving a little more dignity to her character."[23] She points out, in a significant manner, that the "behavior of Caterina in the gallery is essential to my conception of her nature in the plot. . . . And I cannot stir a step aside from what I feel to be true in character."[24] Character is an unfolding from the mind, a thought process which gradually entangles the individual in a self-secreted cocoon. Strong personalities, who become conscious after disenchantment, break out of the cocoon, but weak ones, like Caterina, involve themselves more in its mesh. Caterina cannot escape from herself.

Unlike Caterina and Wybrow, Maynard is related to Cheverel in a thoroughly romantic way. Being, by nature, "an affectionate lad, who retained a propensity to white rabbits, pet squirrels, and guinea-pigs, perhaps a little beyond the age at which young gentlemen usually look down on such pleasures as puerile" (iv), he is unable to dissociate himself from his childhood days when Cheverel Manor was an enchanted palace and Caterina its haunting nymph. The reverend gentleman grows into adulthood without realizing it, without realizing that Caterina is only a part of his illusory youth.

Gilfil's microcosm is not created from a sense of self-importance, but from a trick of memory. If Captain Wybrow is guilty of denying the memories of the past, Rev Gilfil is guilty of indulging them. His primary error is failure to see anything worthwhile in the universe except the Caterina of his memory. His thoughts and actions seem to emanate from her whims. The talkative Mrs Patten complains that "I never see'd a man so wrapt up in a woman. He looked at her as if he was worshippen' her, an' as if he wanted to lift her off the ground ivery minute, to save her the trouble o'walkin' " (i).

Through the agency of an affectionate memory, the big, strong Maynard Gilfil becomes enslaved to a diminutive undeserving girl.[25] His submission to Caterina is not a legitimate outgrowth of a mature love affair but an irresponsible surrender to weakness. "Wherever weakness is not harshly controlled," writes George Eliot, "it must govern, as you may see when a strong man holds a little child by the hand, and how he is pulled hither and thither and wearied in his walk by his submission to the whims and feeble movements of his companion."[26]

Ironically, Tina is enslaved, by her passions, to Wybrow in the same degree that Maynard is enslaved to her. Consequently Maynard's devotions are rewarded with unmerited contempt: "As for Tina, the little minx was perfectly well aware that Maynard was her slave; he was the one person in the world whom she did as she pleased with; and I need not tell you that this was a symptom of her being perfectly heart-whole so far as he was concerned: for a passionate woman's love is always over-shadowed by fear" (iii). Rev Gilfil's sacrifices are thus unwarranted, and the view of Mrs Patten that he could have done much better if he had left Caterina alone is a fair judgment.

When Caterina disappears from Cheverel, Gilfil's world collapses and his diseased retina sees the beloved minx in every object that catches his eyes:

> There is something white behind that overhanging bough. His knees tremble under him. He seems to see part of her dress caught on a branch, and her dear dead face upturned. Oh God, give strength to Thy creature, on whom Thou hast laid this great agony! He is nearly up to the bough, and the white object is moving. It is a water-fowl, that spreads its wings and flies away screaming. (xvii)

His impassioned grief sees only cruelty in a world without Caterina, and the pool in which she is supposedly drowned looms as a menacing image of a killer which "was not now laughing with sparkles among the water-lilies," but "looked black and cruel under the sombre sky, as if its cold depths held relentlessly all the murdered hope and joy of Maynard Gilfil's life" (xvii).

He refuses to accept the reality of her death, and makes a fetish of her, after her death, by preserving her chamber as an object of worship:

> On the little dressing table there was a dainty looking-glass in a carved and gilt frame; bits of wax-candle were still in the branded sockets at the sides, and on one of these branches hung a little black lace kerchief; a faded satin pincushion with the pins rusted in it, a scent bottle. . . Over the mantel-piece, above some bits of rare old china, two miniatures in oval frames. One of these miniatures represented a young man about seven-and-twenty. . . . The other was the likeness of a girl probably not more than eighteen,. . . (i)

The reader is told that sunlight is rarely admitted into this cenotaph which is locked up and closed to all but Gilfil and the cleaning maid. Although he continues to live and to work, his life has become "bare and cheerless." The narrow chamber into which his better feelings have shrunk is a "visible symbol of the secret chamber in his heart, where he had long turned the key on early hopes and early sorrows, shutting up for ever all the passion and the poetry of his life" (i).

The quotation is rather ironic. Gilfil does not shut up the poetry of his life; if he does, his disenchantment would lead, as in the case of Adam Bede or Dorothea Brooke, to regeneration and a novel conception of life. He merely enshrines his illusions to the detriment of his better life. The renunciation he embraces is narrow and does not unite his microcosm with the historical moral universe about him. "All self-sacrifice is good," George Eliot says of Jane Eyre, "but one would like it to be in a somewhat nobler cause than that of a diabolical law which chains a man soul and body to a putrefying carcase."[27] By making his passion a law of his life, Gilfil forgets the larger possibilities of life, and instead of developing into a "grand tree expanding into liberal shade," he becomes "a whimsical misshapen trunk" (xxi). He fails to modulate into his Hieria.

"Janet's Repentance"

"Janet's Repentance" lacks the artistic control of the two preceding stories because its scope is much too large to be fully developed in the limited space of a novelette. Instead of tracing the process by which the character comes to create a private world that involves him in moral conflicts, it presents an entire community that is isolated from the moral universe. It is structured on the division of Milby between two morally opposed factions--the Dempstrians and the Tryanites. One group is amoral and egocentric, the other is altruistic and morally conscious. Complication is achieved by involving individual egoisms in the bitter conflict.

The drama begins with Milby at its moral nadir, when everyone expects an "ingenuous vice or two" from his neighbour, when clients are "proud of their lawyers' unscrupulousness as the patrons of fancy are proud of their champion's condition," when religion is an irreverent worship of costume and display of "worldliness," "vanity," and "ostrich feathers." Yet it is not the abject ignorance of Milby that provides the tragic drama of "Janet's Repentance," but its cynical rejection of moral excellence and resistance to change. The person who totally personifies the egocentric moral immobility of Milby is lawyer Robert Dempster, the bullying persecutor of Tryan and Janet, who represents the mind of Milby in a nutshell when he says, "Depend upon it, whenever you see a man pretending to be better than his neighbours, that man has either some cunning end to serve, or his heart is rotten with spiritual pride" (i). This is a key statement which sets off the conflict, as well as the pattern, of the story.

In practice, the lawyer, acting on behalf of Milby, arrogates to himself the right to expel anyone whose ethics happen to differ from those of his neighbours: "Milby will do better without Mr Tryan than without Robert Dempster" (vii), he boasts; elsewhere he offers his importance in Milby as a defence against the incursions of knowledge:

> "I don't care a straw, Sir, either for you

> or your Encyclopaedia. . . Will you tell me, Sir, that I don't know the origin of Presbyterianism? I, Sir, a man known through the country, entrusted with the affairs of half a score parishes; while you, sir, are ignored by the very fleas that infest the miserable alley in which you were bred. (i)

Dempster is as much a creator as a creation of Milby. His undaunted egoism is applauded by an ignorant audience: "A loud and general laugh, with 'You'd better let him alone, Byles;' 'You'll not get the better of Dempster in a hurry,' drowned the retort of the too well-informed Mr Byles, who, white with rage, rose and walked out of the bar." His drunkenness is not merely tolerated but acclaimed as the necessary antecedent of knowledge: "He's a long-headed feller, Dempster; why, it shows yer what a headpiece Dempster has; as he drink a bottle o'brandy at a sittin', an' yet see further through a stone wall when he's done, than other folks 'll see through a glass winder" (ii).

"It is a fallacy to believe," George Eliot writes in her review, "The Natural History of German Life", that "high morality and refined sentiment can grow out of harsh social relations, ignorance, and want; or that the working-classes are in a condition to enter at once into a millenial state of altruism wherein everyone is caring for everyone else, and no one for himself."[28] A mediator is required in order to effect the transition from a harsh amoral state to one of culture and civilization. The plot of "Janet's Repentance," calls for the mind of a Hieria to effect the transition which Milby is so desparately in need of. The source of Milby's ignorance and cruelty is loss of tenderness to tradition. Dempster's heartless persecution of Tryan and his cruelty to his wife derive from a sense of his self-importance as the defender of the customs of Milby. His earlier tenderness to his mother, the little "mamsy," shows that he is not naturally destitute of feeling, and that his callousness is an acquired habit of thought in which opinion has supplanted feeling. It is here that Rev Tryan, a man of balanced feeling and intellect, comes in.

Rev Tryan is presented as an emotional contrast with the Dempstrians. Like Dempster, he has his own egoistic opinions on religion and society. His critics are too quick to point out that he identifies "Christianity with a too narrow doctrinal system," that "he sees God's work exclusively in antagonism to the world, the flesh and the devil," and that his "intellectual culture is too limited" (x). Even the passive Janet is piqued by his "talks about faith, and grace, and all that, making people believe they are better than others and that God loves them more than He does the rest of the world" (xii). However, unlike Dempster and his followers, his better feelings run ahead of his opinions, and his actions originate from his fine sentiment and not from his doctrinal errors.

This is a cardinal point with George Eliot. A generous altruistic feeling is a surpassing virtue, particularly when it gives rise, as it does in the case of Tryan, to great and humane actions.

Tryan does not, like Dempster, boast of his moral preeminence, but sympathetically identifies himself with the frailty of man. "Pray for me Sally," he says to the dying girl, "that I may have strength too when the hour of great suffering comes. It is one of my worst weaknesses to shrink from bodily pain and I think the time is perhaps not far off when I shall have to bear what you are bearing" (xii). This is the tender humility that captures Janet's imagination. Rev Tryan anticipates a long line of father-confessor priests like Irwine, Lyon, and Farebrother--who, by Christ-like examples, serve as cultural mediators between rural communities and civilization.[29] He is not developed in the novel as a real character; he had had his baptism of disenchantment and had modulated into a Hieria before reaching the stage. He functions as a religious agent who brings moral life to Milby:

> Evangelicalism had brought into palpable existence and operation in Milby society the idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life. No man can begin to mould himself on a faith or an idea without rising to a higher order or experience: a principle of

> subordination, of self-mastery has been introduced into his nature. . . . The first condition of human goodness is something to love; the second, something to reverence. And this latter precious gift was brought to Milby by Mr Tryan and Evangelicalism. (x)

The people of Milby are not in a condition to embrace higher morality unless their rustic minds are wrought upon by a loving God. Tryan's success lies in his ability to replace the narrow egoistic microcosm of Milby with the broader loving universe of the Christian God.[30] This God is in fact synonymous with the historically evolving ethical world which is the aggregation of the altruistic selves of humanity at large. Tryan's advice to Janet to lean on God instead of her own strength is a Christian mode of becoming a Hieria:

> But when once we feel our helplessness in that way, and go to Christ, desiring to be freed from the power as well as the punishment of sin, we are no longer left to our own strength. As long as we live in rebellion against God, desiring to have our own will, seeking happiness in the things of this world, it is as if we shut ourselves up in a crowded, stifling room, where we breathe only poisoned air; but we have only to walk out under the infinite heavens, and we breathe the pure free air that gives us health, and strength, and gladness. (xviii)

Janet is an individual caught in the hectic combat between Idione and Hieria. She is proud and "a little too much lifted up, perhaps by her superior education, and too much given to satire," say her neighbours. Pride appears to be the governing principle of her little egoistic world. She marries against the advice of her friends because Robert Dempster is the only man in Milby fit for her; she buys Tryan's sermons in order to ridicule them, and eagerly volunteers to promote her husband's cruel caricature of the curate. Like Idione, she proudly internalizes her sorrows, and when disenchantment comes, she tries unsuccessfully to resist consciousness by blunting her senses with alcohol. In spite of her failings, however, she retains a store of native goodness which draws her to the evangelical preacher.

Tryan does for her what Milly did for Barton. He resurrects her better feelings and with resurrection comes identification with the larger moral universe. Her conversion is preceded by an intense sentimental experience in which her ego melts into that of her confessor:

> She clasped her hands tightly, and looked at Mr Tryan with eager, questioning eyes, with parted, trembling lips, with the deep horizontal lines of over-mastering pain on her brow. In this artificial life of ours, it is not often we see a human face with all a heart's agony on it, uncontrolled by self-consciousness; when we do see it, it startles us as if we had suddenly waked into the real world of which this everyday one is but a puppet-show copy. (xviii)

Janet functions as a moral bridge between the Demprstrians and the Tryanites: "Ah, what a difference between our lives," Janet says to Tryan after her conversion. "You have been choosing pain, and working and denying yourself; and I have been thinking only of myself." She recognizes, as Caterina, Barton, and others did, that self-absorption is the source of that pride which isolates one and whole communities from the larger stream of humanity. Her moral role is coincidental with her technical function in the novel. It is her growth from Idione to Hieria which makes the resolution of the conflict between the Dempstrians and the Tryanites possible.

The stories of Scenes of Clerical Life are constructed on a similar pattern. The major characters in "Amos Barton" and "Janet's Repentance" undergo change, from Idione to Hieria, through love and veneration. Amos is regenerated through his discovery of Milly's love after her death; Janet through veneration for the God preached by Rev Tryan. But the characters in "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" fail to grow morally. Captain Wybrow, from a habit of indolence, is morally inactive. Both Rev Gilfil and Caterina do not have sufficient willpower to save themselves from their emotions, although they seem to possess good minds. Where the characters undergo moral growth, the communities grow also, because a moral relationship exists between communities and individuals.

Chapter II

Adam Bede

Contending that George Eliot did not have a clear vision of the marriage of Dinah Morris to Adam Bede and the rescue of Hetty Sorrel from the scaffold at the eleventh hour, F.R. Leavis goes on to assert that the artist's "perception was the perception of nature much more than of art."[1] Although the critic does not bother to define more precisely the difference between the visions of nature and art, his criticism has been often re-echoed by those who approach George Eliot through the alembic of Henry James's "Prefaces."[2] The critics are, perhaps, deceived by the apparently simple form of Adam Bede which is so close to nature that its artistic seams have disappeared altogether. The genius of George Eliot calls for tribute rather than blame. Barbara Hardy's perceptive observation that "great works of art make no separation of vision and technique" and that "technical originality and experiments in life" go together in Daniel Deronda[3] is also applicable to Adam Bede.

The formal beauty of Adam Bede is a triumph of George Eliot's technique of patterning a novel through the minds of characters. The form is an elaboration of the Idione-Hieria formula which the writer used in The Scenes of Clerical Life. In Adam Bede, however, the technique improves from the greater scope of the work which allows for a more minute discrimination of various egoisms, in spite of their apparent similarities. A number of microcosms are compared and contrasted with each other, and are eventually judged by reference to a universal moral world.

The novel's essential ganglion is the cogitations of Adam's mind which set off relationships with Arthur and Hetty, and hence bring about a cause-effect pattern for the novel and make the reader desire to see its structure completed or to demand results.[4]

Adam Bede

Adam is not only physically strong, but is also strong-willed. He confesses to Arthur, "It isn't my way to be see-saw about anything: I think my fault lies the other way. When I've said a thing, if it is only to myself, it's hard for me to go back" (xvi).[5] His disease is diagnosed as having "too little fellow-feeling with the weakness that errs in spite of foreseen consequences"(xix). The prescription for his malady is to get "his heartstrings bound round the weak and erring, so that he must share not only the outward consequence of their error, but their inward suffering" (xix). The diagnosis and the therapy suggest the framework of the novel--the correspondence and contrast of the microcosms of Adam, Arthur, and Hetty. Psychologically, the juxtaposing of the strong and the weak is mutually beneficial; Adam gains in feeling while Arthur comes to moral consciousness.[6]

The first chapter of Adam Bede is devoted to an analysis of the microcosm created by Adam's utilitarian mind, and to an evaluation of its comprehensiveness when placed in an analogous relationship with other cosmologies. When he first appears on the stage, Adam is singing his favourite song: "Awake, my soul, and with the sun/ Thy daily stage of duty run;/ Shake off dull sloth. . ."(i). The hymn, with its emphasis on punctuality, energy, and duty, informs the reader of Adam's ethical inclinations and serves as an introduction to his sermon on the virtues of labour:

> "Look at the canals, an' th' aqueducs, an' th' coal-pit engines, and Arkwright's mills there at Cromford; a man must learn summat beside Gospel to make them things, I reckon. But t' hear some o'them preachers, you'd think as a man must be doing nothing all's life but shutting's eyes and looking what's a going on inside him. I know a man must have the love o'God in his soul, and the Bible's God's word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put his sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand. And this is my way o'looking at it: There's the sperrit o'God in all things and all times--weekday as well as Sunday--and i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls; and if a man does bits o' jobs out o' working hours--builds a oven for's wife to save her from going to the bakehouse, or scrabs at his bit o' garden and makes two potatoes grow instead o' one, he's doing more good, and he's just as near to God, as if he was running after some preacher and a-praying and a-groaning."

Adam's mind conceives of life only in its relationship to work, and his reaction against being "over-speritial" is balanced against his being over-empirical in the novel. In the above passage and elsewhere in Adam Bede, his analogies are almost always drawn from mathematics and science, betraying the limitations of his imagination. His universe is essentially that in which everybody does his job automatically, like his dog Gyp, which habitually carries his master's dinner basket without grumbling. Adam forgets that man, unlike his dog, is controlled largely by his emotions and is not predestined to a particular form of duty even for the benefit of society.[7] Adam's egoism, like Dorothea Brooke's, is not rooted in self-interest but in an altruistic concern for the welfare of man, as his emphasis on agricultural improvements show. There is in him, from the very beginning, the Hieria seed which only needs to be developed. His flaw is in his rigidity, a rigidity which makes him see only himself in others, fancying that everyone ought to share his enthusiasm for toil. His clash with Wiry Ben defines the nature of his egoism and is central to the author's conception of the novel:

> "Nonsense," said Adam still wrathful;. . . "I hate to see a man's arms drop down as if he was shot, before the clock's fairly struck, just as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in's work. The very grindstone 'ill go on turning a bit after you loose it."
>
> "Bodderation, Adam!" exclaimed Wiry Ben. "Lave a chap aloon, will 'ee? Ye war a-finding faut wi' preachers a while agoo--y'are fond enough o'preachin' yoursen. Ye may like work better nor play, but I like play better nor work; that'll commodate ye--it laves ye th' more to do." (i)

Barbara Hardy appropriately remarks that Wiry Ben's "preference for play becomes the moral extremity of Arthur's relation with Hetty, which Adam at first can barely comprehend, and which he is forced not only to comprehend but even to forgive."[8] One might add, in the same context, that Adam's faultfinding with preachers anticipates his ironic union with a preacher at the end of the novel, while his positive response to the criticism of Wiry Ben is an early seed of a consciousness of another point of view.

His first real crisis comes on the very day on which his fine theories are questioned at the workshop. On reaching home, he finds that his father has not made the coffin he supposedly promised to make. Thias Bede's negligence of duty challenges his utilitarian view of the universe, and he refuses to eat because even the process of internal metabolism must be subordinated to duty. His throat, he claims, is "too full to swallow victuals." He threatens to go away from a community from which he has become morally alienated. Before fulfilling his threat, however, he must restore balance to his disrupted world by performing the rites of duty:

> "Why, thee canstna get the coffin ready," said Lisbeth. "Thee't work thyself to death. It 'ud take thee all night to do't."
>
> "What signifies how long it takes me? Isn't the coffin promised? I'd work my right hand off sooner than deceive people with lies i' that way. It makes me mad to think on't. I shall overrun these doings before long. I've stood enough of 'em." (iv)

Against his threats, against his utilitarian cosmology, Lisbeth opposes another kind of world--the universe of emotions and of the past:

> . . . if thee't gone a-workin' i' distant parts, an' Seth belike gone arter thee, and thy feyther not able to hold a pen for's hand shakin', besides not knowin' where thee art? Thee mun forgie thy feyther--thee munna be so bitter again' him. He war a good feyther to thee afore he took to th' drink. He's a clever workman, an' taught thee thy trade, remember, an's niver gen me a blow nor so much as an ill word--no, not even in's drink. Thee wouldstna ha' 'im go to the workhus--thy own feyther--an' him as was a fine-growed man an' handy at everythin' amost as thee art thysen, five-an'-twenty 'ear ago, when thee wast a baby at the breast." (iv)

What Lisbeth is presenting is a world whose moral content cannot be justified on utilitarian principles. It is that felt world which Adam is later to recognize as the essence of human society. Meanwhile, Adam is not wholly converted, although he is quite willing to make a mental review of his past and present in order to find a faithful guide for the future:

> . . . And then the day came back to him when he was a little fellow and used to run by his father's side, proud to be taken out to work, and prouder still to hear his father boasting to his fellow-workmen how "the little chap had an uncommon notion o' carpentering." What a fine active fellow his father was then! When people asked Adam whose little lad he was, he had a sense of distinction as he answered, "I'm Thias Bede's lad"--he was quite sure everybody knew Thias Bede: didn't he make the wonderful pigeonhouse at Broxton parsonage? Those were happy days. . . (iv)

Memories engender feelings which bring Adam to the brink of the universal moral world. He resolves that "they that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of those that are weak, and not please themselves. . . It is plain enough you get into the wrong road i' this life if you run after this and that only for the sake o' making things easy and pleasant to yourself" (iv). Adam's cogitation is the beginning of a series of self-assessments that ultimately lead to regeneration. His cogitations prove the main tenet of my thesis, that action, in George Eliot, is the result of what takes place in the character's mind. The disenchantment incident on Thias Bede's funeral brings the dim consciousness that wrongs are perhaps irremediable:

> "Ah, I was always too hard," Adam said to himself. "It's a sore fault in me as I'm so hot and out o' patience with people when they do wrong, and my heart gets shut up against 'em. I see clear enough there's more pride nor love in my soul, for I could sooner make a thousand strokes with th' hammer for my father than bring myself to say a kind word to him. And there went plenty o' pride and temper to the strokes, as the devil will be having his finger in what we call our duties as well as our sins. Mayhap the best thing I ever did in my life was only doing what was easiest for myself. It's allays been easier for me to work nor to sit still, but the real tough job for me 'ud be to master my own will and temper, and go right against my own pride. It seems to me now, if I was to find father at home tonight, I should behave different; but there's no knowing--perhaps nothing 'ud be a lesson to us if it didn't come too late. It's well we should feel as life's a reckoning we can't make twice over; there's no real making amends in this world, any more nor you can mend a wrong subtraction by doing your addition right." (xviii)

The importance of this passage cannot be over-estimated. It not only defines the central conflict of Adam Bede--the dichotomy between Adam's egoistic utilitarian microcosm and the moral universe towards which the hero is beginning to gravitate--but is also analytic of the hero's inner motivations. His idea of labour is narrow and inadequate because it does not enlarge his humanity and because it is divorced from the feelings of love; it is motivated by a selfish interest to please himself. He diagnoses his disease as hubris and the therapy is more self control. More significant, however, is the element of doubt which, for the first time, tempers his conception of things.[9] He doubts that his probation is over, wondering whether his attitude would change if he "was to find father at home tonight."

His impatience with Arthur and Hetty is a negative answer to his doubt; he needs more experience to consolidate his gains, and the experience is to be gained through association with characters whose playful approach to life is as remote from Adam's utilitarian cosmology as they are from the universal moral universe of Hieria. At the funeral scene Adam's awakening moral consciousness, which we have seen, is contrasted with Hetty Sorrel's self-absorption, which deafens her senses to the thought-provoking ceremony: "She was absorbed in the thought that Arthur Donnithorne would soon be coming into church, for the carriage must surely be at the church gate by this time. She had never seen him since she parted with him in the wood on Thursday evening" (xviii). Hetty's happy ignorance of anything beyond her immediate pleasures brings into bold relief Adam's growing consciousness of others and foreshadows the irony of the hero's love for her.

On the other hand, the dialogue between Arthur and Adam on the former's way to the Rectory to confess his weakness about Hetty establishes the conflict between the would-be rivals:

> "I should think now, Adam, you never have any struggles within yourself. I fancy you would master a wish that you had made up your mind it was not quite right to indulge, as easily as you would knock down a drunken fellow who was quarrelsome with you. I mean, you are never shilly-shally, first making up your mind that you won't do a thing, and then doing it after all?"
>
> "Well," said Adam, slowly, after a moment's hesitation--"no, I don't remember ever being see-saw in that way, when I'd made my mind up, as you say, that a thing was wrong. It takes the taste out o' my mouth for things, when I know I should have a heavy conscience after 'em. I've seen pretty clear, ever since I could cast up a sum, as you can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see. . . . But it isn't my way to be see-saw, about anything: I think my fault lies th' other way. When I've said a thing, if it's only to myself, it's hard for me to go back."
>
> "Yes, that's just what I expected of you," said Arthur. "You've got an iron will, as well as an iron arm. But however strong a man's resolution may be, it costs him something to carry it out, now and then. We may determine not to gather any cherries, and keep our hands sturdily in our pockets, but we can't prevent our mouths from watering."
>
> "That's true, sir; but there's nothing like settling with ourselves as there's a deal we must do without i' this life. It's no use looking on life as if it was Treddles' on Fair, where folks only go to see shows and get fairings. If we do, we shall find it different. . ." (xvi)

Adam's mighty will-force is both compared and contrasted with the elegant irresolution of Arthur. There is an irony in the sense that Adam's rugged will is to become his embarrassing liability. Had both men heeded the warning implied in their own confessions, the course of Adam Bede would have been different. Arthur vacillates about the confession that would have kept him from Hetty; Adam, to his sorrow, continues to see himself in others. Both men are brought to misfortune because of the way they think.

The development of a full-length novel through the ironic process of a character projecting his ego into another starts, in George Eliot, with Adam Bede and attains artistic perfection in Middlemarch. Adam creates Hetty and Arthur in his own image and endows them with his own qualities. The ideal woman that he admires in Hetty is really himself. The "tenderness and peace" which he attributes to her derive from his preconceived notion of a beautiful woman.[10] He thinks that her "heart is soft," her "temper just as free from angles, her character just as pliant," and that she "will dote on her children" (xv). It is ironic that, far from doting on her children, Hetty actually kills her babe. According to B.J. Paris, in human relationships the subjective point of view leads to error and suffering. The projection of one's interests into others, he continues, prevents one from knowing others as they really are and "makes communication and mutually satisfying relationships impossible."[11] Ironically, the very subjective point of view which leads Adam into error about Hetty and Arthur operates also to bring him to moral consciousness. "It isn't notions sets people doing the right thing," an aged Adam reflects, "it's feelings" (xvii). Adam, however, has yet to learn his lesson. His speech in praise of Arthur, at the latter's birthday party, like his admiration for Hetty, is a projection of his theory of life into Arthur: "He's one o' those gentlemen as wishes to do the right thing, and to leave the world a bit better than he found it, which it's my belief every man may do, whether he's gentle or simple, whether he sets a good bit o' work going and finds the money, or whether he does the work with his own hands" (xxiv). By thinking that Arthur and everyone else ought to embrace his utilitarian religion, he foreshadows the disappointments which bring his sorrows.

Before his crucial confrontation with Arthur in Chase Grove, the narrator reminds the reader of the hero's subjective view of life which makes his happiness dependent on what he can "believe and feel about others." On his way to the Chase he is entertaining pleasant thoughts about Arthur when suddenly he sees him in a compromising situation with Hetty. He is dumbfounded because the world he has known has come to a sudden collapse: "He remained as motionless as a statue, and turned almost as pale" (xxvii). If his father's negligence of duty disrupts his utilitarian concept of society, Arthur's flirtation with Hetty destroys its well-ordered symmetry. He reacts with extreme shock in each case.

The Chase Grove scene is the structural centre of Adam Bede because it brings to a dramatic conflict the two states of mind on which the work is patterned. Arthur, representing the amoral playful approach to life, which Wiry Ben had earlier advocated, projects his thoughts into Adam, whom he hopes is a "sensible fellow, and would not babble" about his secret affair with Hetty to other people. Because of the way he thinks, he is

> confident that he could laugh the thing off, and explain it away. And so he sauntered forward with elaborate carelessness--his flushed face, his evening dress of fine cloth and fine linen, his hands half thrust into his waist-coat pockets, all shone upon by the strange light which the light clouds had caught up even to the Zenith, and were now shedding down between the topmost branches above him. (xxvii)

In garb and mood, Arthur is the exact opposite of Adam who stands gravely in his drab working-dress, "petrified by an unseen force," and making a mental review of Arthur's past relationships with Hetty, a review in which he sees much that is reprehensible. Adam's speech reveals the length of the moral and emotional distances that exist between them:

> "Why then, instead of acting like th' upright, honourable man we've all believed you to be, you've been acting the part of a selfish light-minded scoundrel. You know, as well as I do, what it's to lead to, when a gentleman like you kisses and makes love to a young woman like Hetty, and gives her presents as she's frightened for other folks to see. And I say it again, you're acting the part of a selfish light-minded scoundrel, though it cuts me to th' heart to say so, and I'd rather ha' lost my right hand."

Arthur responds by generalizing his own microcosm, and is suprised that anybody should view the matter otherwise:

> "Every pretty girl is not such a fool as you, to suppose that when a gentleman admires her beauty, and pays her a little attention, he must mean something particular. Every man likes to flirt with a pretty girl, and every pretty girl likes to be flirted with. The wider the distance between them the less harm there is, for then she's not likely to deceive herself." (xxvii)

To Adam, the play-world of Arthur is a nightmare. There is nothing in his ideal world which can accommodate flirtation for its own sake. It is not suprising that he should resort to violence to protect his microcosm. Nevertheless, his fight with Arthur shows that, in spite of his vaunted self-awareness, he has not learnt much from his father's death. His education by experience is not yet over.

The hero's third shock comes with his search for Hetty and the subsequent discovery of her crime. In his very deep agony, Adam questions "if there's a just God" (xli), and threatens dire vengeance on Arthur. As in the instance of Thias Bede's death, Hetty's suffering forces him to "look back on all the previous years as if they had been a dim sleepy existence, and he had only now awaked to full consciousness" (xlii).

But Adam's consciousness is at first only of himself and of what he lost: "My poor Hetty . . . she can never be my sweet Hetty again. . . the prettiest thing God had made--smiling up at me. . . I thought she loved me. . . and was good" (xli). However, Bartle Massey's imaginative painting of Hetty's suffering and the consequences of her fall to her relations, and Rev Irwine's charity make Adam see his own lot in relation to that of others: "We hand folks over to God's mercy, and show none ourselves. I used to be hard sometimes: I'll never be hard again" (xlii). Commenting on the change in Adam, the narrator says that "deep unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state" (xlii). The ritualistic language of this comment suggests not only a happy break in Adam's life but also a passage into a new life. "By accepting the cup of wine and the loaf of bread pushed on him by the school teacher who is himself a sufferer," argues Knoepflmacher, "Adam becomes a celebrant in George Eliot's religion of humanity."[12]

He is a new and much more mellowed Adam whom we meet in Chapter xvii reflecting on moral values. His experiences have taught him that life is much more complex than doctrines and that great principles cannot be separated from great feelings: "There's things go on in the soul, and times when feelings come into you like a rushing mighty wind, as the Scripture says, and part your life in two a'most, so as you look back on yourself as if you was somebody else. Those are things as you can't bottle up in a 'do this' and 'do that' (xvii). The marriage of reason and feeling in Adam corresponds to the reconciling of the objective and subjective elements in him.[13] The result is a new way of thinking.

The change in his conception of the universe also brings about a structural change in the novel. Through his modified feeling he is able now to share in Arthur's suffering, while Arthur, who has acquired more experience comes to understand Adam's feelings. For this reason the structual pattern of the story changes from one of contrast to correspondence. Rev Irwine assures Adam that Arthur, like everyone else, will suffer from the consequences of his action:

> There is no sort of wrong deed of which a man can bear the punishment alone; you can't isolate yourself, and say that the evil which is in you shall not spread. Men's lives are as thoroughly blended with each other as the air they breathe: evil spreads as necessarily as disease. I know, I feel the terrible extent of suffering this sin of Arthur's has caused to others; but so does every sin cause suffering to others besides those who commit it. (xli)

Elsewhere the good parson tells Adam that Arthur "_will_ know--he will suffer, long and bitterly. He has a conscience." The aim of the speech is to help Adam in his difficult journey towards his Hieria by making him enter into the experience of others. The egoist can only emancipate himself from his microcosm when he begins to share in the suffering of others. Although Arthur's suffering takes place offstage, its effect is important, not only for the completion of Adam's transformation, but also for restoring order to Hayslope.

On the other hand, Adam's unrequited passion for Hetty awakens in him novel sensibilities of a more tender nature, and makes him more sensitive to the love of other women. Reflecting later on his love for Dinah Morris, Adam says, "I should never ha' come to know that her love 'ud be the greatest o' blessings to me, if what I counted a blessing hadn't been wrenched and torn away from me, and left me with a greater need, so as I could crave and hunger for a greater and better comfort" (liii). The suffering engendered by the loss of Hetty has made the strong Adam to appreciate his dependence on the sympathy of society. Such appreciation is a milestone in the egoist's journey towards the moral universe. Adam discovers that he needs a prop, and that this prop must be someone other than Hetty. W.J. Harvey complains of the "arbitrariness" of Adam's marriage to Dinah whom he says "does not develop in this last Book," but "simply changes and George Eliot cannot quite gloss over the psychological discontinuity which results."[14] Elsewhere, in the same essay, he insists that Dinah is "static" and is not sufficiently dwelt on to "impress in the imagination of the reader."[15] Harvey's criticism is based on the limited space given to the development of Dinah's character, rather than on an analysis of the psychological structure of the novel. The marriage of Dinah and Adam is a logical consequence of a structural pattern derived from the natural operations of the mind. I stress this point because it touches on the main tenet of my essay, that a character's actions proceed from his conscious as well as unconscious thoughts. If it were not so, Harvey's criticism would be justified. The events of Adam Bede show Adam and Dinah drifting towards each other in their minds. As Adam gains in experience, he also gains in affection: "He did not know that the power of loving was all the while gaining new force within him; that the new sensibilities bought by a deep experience were so many new fibres by which it was possible, nay, necessary to him, that his nature should intertwine with another. Yet he was aware that common affection and friendship were more precious to him than they used to be. . ." (L).

Both characters have a large core of humanity which is momentarily obscured by an egoistic preoccupation with a theory of life: Adam's humanity is shaded by a harsh utilitarian rule, while Dinah's narrow asceticism obscures her altruistic warm-heartedness. The dialogue between them about Arthur reveals more of their inner lives:

> "He's of a rash, warm-hearted nature, like Esau, for whom I have always felt great pity," said Dinah. "That meeting between the brothers, where Esau is so loving and generous, and Jacob so timid and distrustful, notwithstanding his sense of the Divine favour, has always touched me greatly. Truly, I have been tempted sometimes to say that Jacob was of a mean spirit. But that is our trial:--we must learn to see the good in the midst of much that is unlovely."
>
> "Ah," said Adam, "I like to read about Moses

> best, in th' Old Testament. He carried a
> hard business well through, and died when
> other folks were going to reap the fruits;
> a man must have courage to look at his life
> so, and think what'll come of it after he's
> dead and gone. A good solid bit o'work lasts:
> if its only laying a floor down, somebody's
> the better for it being done well, besides
> the man as does it." (xlix)

In spite of differences of approach, there is in each an ideal love for humanity which operates to unite them, when time and experience have modified the doctrinal or theoretical aspect of their beliefs. "Although an organism can only respond to stimulus according to its own modes," says George Lewes in Problems of Life and Mind, "which depend on its structure, and which vary with the variations of structure, yet the very reaction itself tends to establish a modification which will alter subsequent reactions."[16] As the warm emotions latent in each character evolve with experience the thin veneer of doctrine covering them melts away, leaving Adam and Dinah free to gravitate gradually in the direction of each other.

Secondly, the psychological organization of the novel tends to bring Adam and Dinah together. In her relationships with Seth, Hetty, the Poysers, Lisbeth Bede, and Arthur, Dinah is indirectly and unconsciously relating to Adam. She is mentioned early in the story in connection with Adam's objection to preaching; she plays the role of a daughter-in-law to Lisbeth Bede in her sorrow, while Hetty makes love with Arthur in the wood; she consoles

Hetty in jail and makes it possible for Adam to visit with his beloved, and she is instrumental in reconciling Arthur with Adam. The latter recognizes her capacity for love in praising her to Seth: "She's made out o' stuff with a finer grain than most o' the women; I can see that clear enough. But if she's better than they are in other things, I canna think she'll fall short of 'em in loving" (xi). Adam's prophetic statement is the first sign of an unconscious movement towards Dinah. But Lisbeth consciously identifies her first son with the preacher-woman by debunking Seth's pretensions to Dinah's favour: "An' as for his desarving her--she's two 'ear older nor Seth: she's pretty near as old as thee. But that's the way; folks mun allays choose by contraries, as if they must be sorted like the pork--a bit o' good meat wi' a bit o' offal" (xiv).

It is not certain when Dinah's consciousness of her love for Adam begins. But it is safe to assume that her love, like Adam's, evolved gradually through mental contacts--observe that the frequent juxtaposing of Hetty and Dinah brings out the spiritual affinity between the latter and Adam, and hence plays a major role in the evolution of their love. Dinah, however, takes great pains to hide her growing love in religious asceticism: "Speak to my warring passions, 'Peace'," she prays. "Say to my trembling heart, 'Be still!'/ Thy power my strength and fortress is,/ For all things serve thy sovereign will" (L). But it is God's "sovereign will" that she should fall in love with Adam" for her prayers are answered by the startling presence of the hero which makes her to vibrate with "an intense thrill, and for the instant felt nothing else; then she knew her cheeks were glowing, and dared not look round, but stood still, distressed because she could not say good-morning in a friendly way" (L).

I have deliberately dwelt, at some length, on the love of Adam and Dinah, because it is an essential part of Adam's education. Love, in George Eliot, effectively mediates between the egoist and the moral universe. Both Adam and Dinah have, through experience, learned that love should strengthen duty rather than obliterate it. Elsewhere, George Eliot insists that love and duty should not be separated.[17] Like the marriages of Esther Lyon and Felix Holt or Dorothea Brooke and Ladislaw, Dinah's marriage to Adam serves the dual purpose of fulfilling private desires for love as well as strengthening altruistic feelings. Their union is therefore not a conventional device to make them "happy ever after". Its function is rather purgative, liberating them from their narrow microcosms in order to bring them into the broader world of Hieria in which experiences and passions are shared. In any case, their marriage is the logical result of the unfolding of their character.

Arthur Donnithorne

I have already discussed Arthur Donnithorne and Hetty Sorrel in connection with Adam. In the following sections I shall, apropos of the topic of this thesis, show them in their own microcosms.

Unlike Adam's, Arthur's egoistic microcosm does not derive from an entirely subjective concept of the universe, but from a pseudo-objective view which looks on public approbation as in itself a satisfactory index of a moral order. While Adam is concerned with results that may be beneficial to mankind in general, Arthur is content with the admiration of his tenants. To him the traditional "respect" of the Poysers "to whom a good name was as precious as if they had the best blood in the land in their veins" (xiii) has more moral worth than the nature of his relationship with their niece Hetty. In his ideal universe, reward, in the form of praise, atones for wrongs. "If he should unfortunately break a man's legs in his rash driving," he will "be able to pension him handsomely;" or if he should happen to spoil a woman's existence for her, "he will make it up to her with expensive bon-bons, packed up and directed by his own hand" (xii).

But his egoism has also a tinge of altruism, which foreshadows his future regeneration. He often sees himself in the role of the beneficent deity of Hayslope:

> All his pictures of the future, when he should come into the estate, were made up of a prosperous, contented tenantry, adoring their landlord, who would be the model of an English gentleman--mansion in first-rate order, all elegance and high taste--jolly housekeeping, finest stud in Loamshire--purse open to all public objects--in short, everything as different as possible from what was now associated with the name of Donnithorne. (xii)

In spite of these liberal ideas, however, Arthur is primarily conservative in outlook: "No gentleman, out of a ballad," he thought, "could marry a farmer's niece" (xii), and "he never shook hands with any of the farmers" (xvi) for whose welfare he is so solicitous. Like Lydgate and Casaubon of Middlemarch, his conception of women is conservative and conventional. Hetty is "a little frightened bird! little tearful rose! silly pet!" (xii). His letter terminating his affair with her tells a lot of his social ideas. "I know", he says blandly, "you can never be happy except by marrying a man in your own station; and if I were to marry you now, I should only be adding to any wrong I have done, besides offending against my duty in the other relations of life" (xxxi).

Athur's conservative-liberalism is tainted with a strong desire to please himself. This desire is so dominant that it traps his will-force in the contradiction inherent in the conflict between his moral and passionate lives. His conservative-liberal side draws him in the direction of the norms of the moral world, while his passionate self pushes him away from those norms in the vicinity of Hetty. His dualism is dramatized in the dressing-room scene in which his superficial struggle to escape from Hetty is set against a physical background of "Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens" looking at Arthur instead of "minding the infant Moses." The drift of the captain's mind is shown to be more in accord with the physical setting of the scene than with his resolutions: "If the heart of a man is depressed with cares," his lovelorn heart sings, "The mist is dispelled when a woman appears;/ Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly,/ Raises the spirits, and charms our ears" (xii). The song, as John Paterson rightly observes, "better indicates the drift of Arthur's feelings than his resolution to go fishing."[18] Unlike Adam's, Arthur's irresolute mind has no time for self-interrogation, and hence instead of the self-assessment which saves Adam from sinking further and further into error, he indulges in a series of comfortable self-deceits which only lead to blind alleys. "I'm a devil of a fellow for getting myself into a hobble," he tells himself complacently, "but I always take care the load shall fall on my own shoulders" (xii).

His education, like Captain Wybrow's, is deficient and does not prepare him for the serious problems of life. "You've had four or five years of experience more than I've had," Arthur says to Adam, "and I think your life has been a better school to you than college has been to me." Adam replies by citing the not so flattering opinion of the peppery but intelligent school teacher Bartle Massey: "Why, sir, you seem to think o' college something like what Bartle Massey does. He says college mostly makes people like bladders--just good for nothing but t'hold the stuff as is poured into 'em" (xvi). His evaluation of books shows that his education has been deficient. Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads is "a twaddling stuff," and Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, "queer, wizard-like stories." He is not interested in the political, religious, and intellectual movements of his time and refuses to have anything to do with a book or pamphlet that ends in "ism" (v). His world lacks spiritual values and is destitute of that sense of purpose which leads to moral seriousness.[19] For this reason, avoiding whatever is serious becomes in him a second nature which supplies the tragic complications of his life and of Adam Bede.

He shrinks from the confession that could have brought him moral consciousness because "the conversation had taken a more serious tone than he had intended" (xvi). The narrator traces his apparently impulsive fear of the "serious" to a habitual attitude of a mind trained to evade matters that require effort:

> Our mental business is carried on much in the same way as the business of the state: a great deal of hard work is done by agents who are not acknowledged. . . . Possibly there was some such unrecognized agent secretly busy in Arthur's at this moment--possibly it was the fear lest he might hereafter find the fact of having made a confession to the Rector a serious annoyance, in case he should not be able quite to carry out his good resolutions! (xvi)

Again, as in the case of Wybrow, a habit of doing only what is pleasant leads to a fatal indolence that plays a large role in his relationship with others. Believing that events will always turn out pleasantly in his favour, he steals Hetty's love and is no more conscious of any consequences than a bird which has carried pollen grains from one flower to another is. Hetty remains for him a "pretty butterfly" to be played with. It never occurs to him that Hetty is capable of an emotional attachment. His imagination, thus, helps to create the tragic irony which controls his relationship with Hetty, for like Arthur, Hetty is also the center of her own microcosm; far from imagining herself as a "butterfuly," she sees her "pretty" self in the role of Arthur's Cinderella queen; she is certain that he wants to marry her and "make a lady of her" (xv).

The irony of the narrative is intensified, towards the end of the novel, when Arthur receives the news of old Donnithorne's death. The drift of his mind is conspicuously shown to have no reference at all to Hetty who, unknown to him, is languishing in jail, awaiting hanging for murdering his child by her:

> Now his real life was beginning, now he would have room and opportunity for action. . . He would show the Loamshire people what a fine country gentleman was,. . . He felt himself riding over the hills in breezy autumn days, looking after favourite plans of drainage and enclosure; then admired on sombre mornings as the best rider on the best horse in the hunt; spoken well of on market days as a first-rate landlord; by and by making speeches at election dinners, and showing a wonderful knowledge of agriculture; the patron of new ploughs and drills. . . . (xliv)

Arthur's microcosm depends on the manipulation of the future at the expense of the present. But his egoism, unlike Hetty's or Captain Wybrow's, does not derive from an unfeeling nature, but from ignorance, which his upbringing and education have done nothing to improve. There is always in his warm nature a reserve of humanity, which, when acted upon by experience, would lead to moral consciousness. "I can't be entirely deceived in his character," says the perceptive Rev Irwine. "I am convinced--I am sure he didn't fall under temptation without a struggle. He may be weak, but he is not callous, not coldly selfish. I am persudaded that this will be a shock of which he will feel the effects all his life" (xli). Arthur's suffering and subsequent regeneration are real and his second confrontation with Adam at the Chase Grove shows how far he has moved in the direction of Hieria:

> "Haven't I loved her too? Didn't I see her yesterday? Shan't I carry the thought of her about with me as much as you will? And don't you think you would suffer more if you'd been in fault?" (xlviii)

The new Arthur is a far cry from the old complacent self-righteous, gallivanting, rural deity of Hayslope. He is a much more mellowed Arthur who, on the eve of a voluntary exile, appeals for help in remedying the damage his egoism has done: "I only wish to ask you if you will help me to lessen the evil consequences of the past, which is unchangeable. I don't mean consequences to myself but to others" (xlviii). His appeal for outside help is a sign that he has emancipated himself from his microcosm.

Hetty Sorrel

Perhaps, with the exception of Rosamond Vincy, Hetty Sorrel is the most Idionic of all George Eliot characters. Her egoism has an unpleasant dryness about it which alienates her from the human race and associates her with beasts and inanimate objects, with which she is regularly compared in the novel. The comparison is by no means a mere rhetorical device, but a mechanism to externalize her mindlessness. Where Caterina's kinship with animals brings out the pathos of her life, Hetty's stresses the quality of her emotional desiccation. Her beauty is that of "frisking things"; Mrs Poyser observes that her heart is "as hard as a pebble" and that "things take no more hold on her than if she was a dried pea." Elsewhere, she is "no better than a peacock", or "no better nor a cherry wi' a hard stone inside it." Mrs Bede and Mr Massey have similar hard words for her. She is apathetic to anything that does not concern her directly, as her reaction to Thias Bede's death shows. Her incapacity to love even the tumbling Totty, who is everyone else's favourite, foreshadows the murder of her infant child.

Blessed with the "timidity of a luxurious pleasure-seeking nature which shrinks from the hint of pain" (xv), Hetty recoils from any confrontation with an adult problem. "Don't talk to me so, Dinah," she shouts in a childish sobbing voice. "Why do you come to frighten me? I've never done anything to you. Why can't you let me be?" (xv) Her microcosm is that of a child who sees people and events only as they affect her own desires and little wishes, failing which they are of no use whatsoever.

Chapter ix, entitled "Hetty's World," comes, in the text, after the chapter on "Vocation," which is devoted to Dinah's world. The morally conscious, self-sacrificing mind of Dinah serves, in the artistic pattern of Adam Bede, as an introductory contrast to Hetty and shows the distance that exists between the latter and the moral universe. The limits of Hetty's cosmograph are descried by the flattering looks of admirers. The "bright admiring glances from a handsome young gentleman, with white hands, a golden chain, occasional regimentals, and wealth and grandeur immeasurable" are "the warm rays that set her poor heart vibrating." She is "used to the thought that people liked to look at her," and is "not blind to the fact that young Luke Britton of Broxton came to Hayslope Church on a Sunday afternoon on purpose that he might see her," or to the advances of the "tall, upright, clever, brave Adam Bede." While Hetty is thinking these thoughts, Dinah is in an adjoining room with Rev Irwine thinking of the welfare of others and expressing the "sense of the divine love," she feels working among the poor in Snowfield. The inner sphere of her mind is as expansive as the heavens, "stretched out like a tent, and you feel the everlasting arms around you." Dinah's wide heaven contrasts with Hetty's narrow "carpeted parlour" of "white stockings, Nottingham lace," and "a handkerchief that smells nice like Miss Lydia Donnithorne's when she drew it out at Church."

Her egoism often takes the form of self-worship. Creeger finds a strain of "autoeroticism" in her inordinate love of fine clothes, adornment, and self-worship. He points out significantly that Arthur is "the objectification of her day-dreaming desires which are the projection in fantasy of her own ego; she worships herself in Arthur."[20] It may, of course, be added that the egoist in George Eliot always finds his image in what he admires. Hetty and Rosamond are, however, different from others in the sense that they cannot admire the intrinsic quality of an object which has no reference to themselves. A detached appreciation of an object tends to mediate between the ego and an objective universe. Dorothea Brooke's admiration for the intrinsic quality of a bracelet, for instance, awakens in her a consciousness of a part of herself which she is trying to suppress. But Hetty cannot admire a lace which is not worn by herself or a projection of herself in Lydia. Similarly, her worship of Arthur, which Creeger rightly calls "self-worship," is so glued to her ego that it becomes harmful. Arthur produces in her

> a pleasant narcotic effect, making her tread the ground and go about her work in a sort of dream, unconscious of weight or effort, and showing her all things through a soft, liquid veil, as if she were living not in this solid world of brick and stone, but in a beatified world, such as the sun lights up for us in the waters. . . . For three weeks at least, her inward life had consisted of little else than living through in memory the looks and words Arthur had directed towards her. (ix)

But enchanted dreams soon change into desire and anxiety. Her frenzied mind is dramatized in its restlessness as she waits for her lover in the wood:

> She enters the wood, where it is already twilight, and every step she takes, the fear at her heart becomes colder. If he should not come! O how dreary it was--the thought of going out at the other end of the wood, into the unsheltered road, without having seen him. She reaches the first turning towards the Hermitage, walking slowly--he is not there. She hates the leveret that runs across the path: she hates everything that is not what she longs for. She walks on, happy whenever she is coming to a bend in the road, for perhaps he is behind it. No. She is beginning to cry; her heart has swelled so, the tears stand in her eyes; she gives one great sob, while the corners of her mouth quiver, and the tears roll down. (xiii)

Here is selfishness in its isolated loneliness, a selfishness that "hates everything that is not what it longs for," and hence leads to that heart-gnawing monomaniacal tendency which we saw in Caterina. But Hetty's disenchantment comes with Arthur's letter: "There was a feeble dawn in the room when Hetty awoke, a little after four o'clock, with a sense of dull misery, the cause of which broke upon her gradually, as she began to discern the objects round her in the dim light" (xxxi). But the experience only brings the "frightening thought that she had to conceal her misery, as well as to bear it, in this dreary daylight that was coming." Like Amos Barton, her initial response is to reject her misfortune in "great rushing tears, that blinded her and blotched the paper. She felt nothing but that Arthur was cruel--cruel to write so, cruel not to marry her." The imagery of the narrative calls attention to her failure to understand her misery. The tears that blind her sight come from a "half-numbed mental condition" that is incapable of tragic feelings. She takes a mock-heroic revenge on the offending letter which she crushes in her palm, and hates its writer "for the very reason that she hung upon him with all her love--all the girlish passion and vanity that made up her love." Her despair is all the more desperate because she has no other frame of reference; she has neither roots nor large sympathies which can give her a purpose for existence and provide the detachment she needs to overcome her sorrow: "She's no better than a peacock, as 'ud strut about on the wall, and spreads its tail when the sun shone if all the folks i' the parish was dying," says the redoubtable Mrs Poyser, "there's nothing seems to give her a turn i' th' inside" (xv).

Hetty rejects the vision presented by her disenchantment because it is disconcertingly out of tune with her microcosm and vague world-picture. A lover of admiration and a self-worshipper, she is unable to reconcile herself to a prospect that is far from flattering to her ego. It is consonant with her habit of thought that she should resolve to fly from the scene of her disenchantment, a scene that threatens to impose reality on her: "Hetty looked out from her secret misery towards the possibility of their ever knowing what had happened, as the sick and weary prisoner might think of the possible pillory. They would think her conduct shameful; and shame was torture. That was poor little Hetty's conscience" (xxxi).

Hetty's trip to Windsor, according to Creeger, externalizes the concealed hardness in her.[21] After the death of her child, she is emotionally struck like a stone: "My heart went like a stone: I couldn't wish or try for anything; it seemed like as if I should stay there for ever, and nothing 'ud ever change" (xlv). As she wanders aimlessly in the wood, her one longing is "to be safe at home"; she hates her baby for standing between her and the comfort of the Poysers' hearth. "I seemed to hate it," she testifies, "it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck"(xlv).

Suffering brings a momentary consciousness of the benefits she has received from others; "Now for the first time, as she lay down tonight in the strange hard bed, she felt that her home had been a happy one, that her uncle had been very good to her, that her quiet lot at Hayslope among the things and people she knew. . . was what she would like to wake up to as a reality" (xxxvi). Her meagre consciousness, still devoid of any sense of duty, has nothing of the Hieria in it. It is really nothing but a Dantean regret for pleasure that is forever lost:[22] "The bright hearth and the warmth and the voices of home,--the secure uprising and lying down,--the familiar fields, the familiar people, the Sundays and holidays with their simple joys of dress and feasting,--all the sweets of her young life rushed before her now, and she seemed to be stretching her arms towards them across a great gulf" (xxxvii). When Dinah enters her prison cell she shrieks, "Oh, Dinah, won't nobody do anything for me? Will they hang me for certain? . . . I wouldn't mind if they'd let me live" (xlv). This outburst is more in tune with Hetty's timid nature than the facile repentance which she is forced to show.

Just as the marriage of Adam and Dinah is the logical consequence of the operations of their minds, so is Hetty's banishment the cause-effect development of her character as unfolded in the novel. Death on the gallows would have conferred a tragic eminence to a character whose entire moral and emotional economy is on a level with that of "pebbles" and "peacocks." Maggie Tulliver, by contrast, rejects exile because she is rooted in the soil, because her affectionate nature, as depicted in The Mill on the Floss, cannot be wrenched from loved home and people. But Hetty has neither roots nor affections to cherish: "There are some plants that have hardly any roots," says the perceptive narrator in Adam Bede, "you may tear them from their native nook of rock or wall, and just lay them over your ornamental flower-pot, and they blossom none the worse. Hetty could have cast all her past life behind her, and never cared to be reminded of it again" (xv). Her banishment is the fulfilment of her life's promise. She never for once entertains a thought that transcends the claims of her microcosm. She can never reach her Hieria.

Hayslope

Alongside of the major characters is the community of Hayslope whose mind is represented by the Poysers, the Lisbeth Bedes, the Masseys, and the peasantry. Like Milby, Hayslope is isolated physically and mentally from the religious, political, and industrial movements that had swept England several decades before. Evangelicalism infiltrates Milby from the coal-mining district of Paddington-Common three miles away, just as Methodism comes to Hayslope from Treddles, a coal-district some three miles distant.

Hayslope is self-satisfied and unresponsive to events outside its narrow microcosm because its mind is clogged in the richness of its soil. "I have noticed," says Dinah, "that in these villages where the people lead a quiet life among the green pastures and the still waters, tilling the ground and tending the cattle, there is a strange deadness to the Word, as different as can be from the great towns, like Leeds. . ." (vii).

There is in the passage an implied analogy between the people and the cattle they tend. This comparison with animals is another instance in which George Eliot derives imagery from the actual life of characters in order to show the closeness of the relationship between art and life. The persistent animal imagery in Adam Bede establishes a relationship between the bucolic mind and its environment. Hall Farm is presented to the reader as a community in which the "thundering bark" of dogs, "the sympathetic croaking" of hens, the "staccato notes" of sows, and the "bleating" of cows mingle with "continuous hum of human voices" (vi). The birds and mammals of the farmyard are as conscious of the sabbath day as the Poysers: "The cocks and hens seemed to know it, and made only crooning subdued noises; the very bull-dog looked less savage, as if he would have been satisfied with a smaller bite than usual" (xviii). Mrs Poyser's witty mind seems to look at life through an alembic of green pastures and fat cows. Seeing Rev Irwine "i' the desk of a Sunday," she says, "is like looking at a full crop o' wheat, or a pasture with a fine dairy o' cows in it; it makes you think the world's comfortable-like" (xiii). She will not give in to Dinah because she is a Methodist, "no more nor a white calf's white 'cause it eats out o' the same bucket wi' a black un" (xviii). Lisbeth thinks that Dinah's upbringing is like "bringin' up a cade lamb" (x).

The bucolic mind is unable to conceive of any broad issue outside its own narrow and immediate concerns. Lisbeth can neither understand Dinah's idealism nor why people should live in Stonyshire: "th' hungry folks had better leave th' hungry country. It makes less mouths for the scant cake" (xi), she says in response to Dinah's spiritual identification with the impoverished labourers of Stonyshire. Similarly, Hayslope's response to politics ranges from unconcern to interested selfishness. Mrs Poyser's repulse of old Squire Donnithorne takes precedence of the news of the French in Italy and Napoleon's withdrawal from Egypt. To Mr Poyser, "the war's a fine thing for the country, an' how 'll you keep prices wi'out it? An' them French are a wicked sort o' folks, by what I can make out; what can you do better nor fight 'em?" But Craig welcomes a brief peace with France in order "to make a holiday for a bit" (lii).

In spite of its physical and mental isolation, Hayslope is no more successful at avoiding integration than Milby. The coming of Dinah and Methodism, Arthur's military services overseas, Hetty's deportation to Australia--these are bridges between Hayslope and a broader universe. More important, however, is the marriage of a broadminded Stonyshire preacher to a conservative but a morally conscious Loamshire artisan, which symbolizes the merging of Hayslope into a wider macrocosm or the unity of Idione and Hieria. It is important to note that as the characters--Adam and Arthur--grow out of their narrow microcosms, society also grows out of its own little world.

Chapter III

The Mill on the Floss

According to U.C. Knoepflmacher, The Mill on the Floss is built on the "two different realities represented by St Ogg's and Dorlcote Mill", or on "the antithesis between the worlds of the Mill by the Ripple and St Ogg's-on-the-Floss."[1] But Barbara Hardy contends that it is the brother and sister relation "rather than the formal opposition of two ways of life, which is prominent throughout the book."[2] But, in fact, both the "antithesis" and the special "brother and sister" relationship derive significance from Maggie's internal conflicts. The heroine is tragically divided between her Hieria and Idione. In view of Barbara Hardy's own conclusion that the theme of the novel is the theme of tragic personal division, and the final resolution in the death "which brings Tom and Maggie together as life could never do, merely emphasizes their relation as brother and sister,"[3] one finds it difficult to accept her claim that the brother-sister relation sets off the essential pattern of The Mill on the Floss.

However, Jerome Thale comes close to defining the pattern when he says that "it is the logic of her [Maggie's] inside which gives significance to her social relationships."[4] The Mill on the Floss is the only full-length novel of George Eliot that is very much dominated by a single character--Maggie. Its essential pattern derives from a clash between the heroine's Idione and Hieria. The one tends to isolate her in a narrow microcosm, the other to liberate her from her Idione. In the following passages, I shall attempt an analysis of her microcosm and demonstrate how she is gradually regenerated and reintegrated into the moral universe.

Maggie

The sympathetic Dr Kenn says that Maggie looks "as if she might turn out to be one of

> 'The souls by nature pitched too high,
> By suffering plunged too low.'" 5

When under the control of her Idione, Maggie is "pitched too high," and she is isolated in a microcosm in which what matters is her cleverness only. After her quarrel with Tom and Lucy, she runs to the gypsies in the hope that they will recognize her cleverness and crown her their queen. She blushes with excitement when her father calls her "clever", and is only too anxious to demonstrate her cleverness to strangers: "Maggie's cheeks began to flush with triumphant excitement: she thought Mr Riley would have a respect for her now; it had been evident that he thought nothing of her before" (Bk,1,iii). To be called clever soon becomes an obsession with her, and she is often driven into excesses to show her cleverness. Tom accuses her of making "ridiculous flights first into one extreme then into another" (Bk.5,v). As we shall see later, she is capable of extreme sensuousness as well as asceticism.

Her cleverness originates in her fertile imagination which often leads her away from reality and places her in a dream world in which she is a queen. As a child, she often dreams of "a world where the people never got any larger than children of their own age, and she made the queen of it just like Lucy, with a little crown on her head, and a little sceptre in her hand. . . only the queen was Maggie herself in Lucy's form" (Bk.1,vii). Childish dreams such as this play an important role in her life, because she mistakes them for reality. Mrs Tulliver complains that: "if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs" (Bk.1,ii). It is her dreaminess that makes her forget to feed Tom's rabbit and thus occasions her first sorrow. Her dreamy nature is the vehicle by which she is betrayed to Stephen. Gordon Haight appropriately observes that "the 'dreamy state' into which she often fell while gazing at the glassy water of the Round Pool till she forgot all about fishing (Bk.1,v) recurs when she sits in the boat opposite Stephen Guest, enveloped in the same sort of enchanted haze and 'borne along by the tide'."^{6} When dreams take the place of reality, they tend to isolate one in the world of one's imagination.

Maggie also has large reserves of human sympathy and affection. But just as her cleverness and imagination make her self-centered, her affection often serves selfish ends. The world image that evolves from her mind is the one in which she is surrounded by admiring people, who are perpetually honouring her for her affection and cleverness. The narrator significantly points out that she prefers weak men who will pay homage to her to strong people who do not need her affection:

> Maggie, moreover, had rather a tenderness for deformed things; she preferred the wry-necked lambs, because it seemed to her that the lambs which were quite strong and well made wouldn't mind so much about being petted; and she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her. She loved Tom very dearly, but she often wished that he cared more about her loving him. (Bk.2,v)

Her affection for Philip Wakem is not a self-sacrificing act of her Hieria, but something that emanates from her desire to be recognized as a queen of cleverness. "Poor Maggie," the narrator says, "was by no means made up of unalloyed devotedness, but put forth large claims for herself where she loved strongly" (Bk.3,ii). I am not suggesting that her love for Philip is in any way false, but rather that is is something that emanates from her Idione. She seems to have a morbid interest in nursing invalids. But whether nursing Tom or her father, she does expect a reward by way of positive response to her caresses. A passionate and often selfish desire for affection is an essential aspect of her microcosm. But affection is never wholly selfish. In future, her love will help her to effect the transition from her Idione to her Hieria. Meanwhile, her expectations lead to dissatisfaction with the dreary life that surrounds her. People are not what she wants them to be; they do not fit into her conception of things:

> She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness, and fits even of anger and hatred towards her father and mother, who were so unlike what she would have them to be--towards Tom, who checked her, and met her thought or feeling always by some thwarting difference--would flow out over her affections and conscience like a lava stream, and frighten her with a sense that it was not difficult for her to become a demon. Then her brain would be busy with wild romances of a flight from home in search of something less sordid and dreary: she would go to some great man--Walter Scott, perhaps--and tell him how wretched and how clever she was, and he would surely do something for her. (Bk.4,iii)[7]

The passage shows the drift of her mind. She is lonely because of her imaginative flights. Mentally, she is ahead of those close to her. Her interpretation of a picture from Daniel Defoe's The History of the Devil not only shows her imaginative power but also her perplexity:

> "It's a dreadful picture, isn't it? But I can't help looking at it. That old woman in the water's a witch--they've put her in to find out whether she's a witch--or not, and if she swims

> she's a witch, and if she's drowned--and
> killed, you know--she's innocent, and not
> a witch, but only a poor silly old woman.
> But what good would it do her then, you know,
> when she was drowned? Only, I suppose,
> she'd go to heaven, and God would make it up
> to her. (Bk.i,iii)

Maggie's perplexity is like the witch's. Her "cleverness" alienates her from society just as the witch's uncanny knowledge isolates her from her community. The witch uses her knowledge to oppress her neighbours; Maggie uses her own to engage in dreams which lift her above her friends. But the more significant aspect of her interpretation of the picture is that it foreshadows her own fate. If she marries the man she loves, she is condemned; if she renounces him, her life is a ruin anyway. She is to die by drowning and the reader is left to ask the question which she asks: "What good would it do her?"

Her first disenchantment does not occur immediately following her father's bankruptcy, as David Carroll assumes,[8] but is a slow process that results from the loss of the family affection, which Maggie needs to nourish her Idione as well as her Hieria. The period that quickly succeeds upon the bankruptcy is anything but disenchanting to the heroine, who finds complete satisfaction for her starved emotional life in the general sorrow which momentarily brings the family together. As I have noted earlier, Maggie's egoism is fed by the gratitude of those to whom she gives her affections. Now that her father is helpless, she can harvest many rewards from her devotion. The "loving remembrance of her partially paralyzed father's tenderness," the narrator says, becomes a conquering "force within her that would enable her to do or bear anything for his sake." The newly inspired love is infectious, for when she sees how Tom is moved by Mr Tulliver's condition she puts "her arm round his neck as she sat by the bed, and the two children forgot everything else in the sense that they had one father and one sorrow" (Bk.3,ii). This joy of sharing in sorrow remains until her father regains full consciousness. The narrator succinctly puts the effect of Mr Tulliver's illness on Maggie thus:

> As long as the paralysis was upon him and it seemed as if he might always be in a childlike condition of dependence--as long as he was still only half awakened to his trouble, Maggie had felt the strong tide of pitying love almost as an inspiration, a new power that would make the most difficult life easy for his sake. (Bk.4,ii) [9]

Mr Tulliver's state of paralytic imbecility is thus soothing to Maggie's egoism. But her jealously cherished intimate relationship with her father diminishes proportionately as her father gains in the consciousness of his true situation. Gradually she is alienated from a father who has become very irritable, from Tom now concerned with providing for the family, from her mother with whom she never really had much in common. Consequently, she withdraws into her Idione which promises nothing but unrelieved suffering:

> Everybody in the world seemed so hard and unkind to Maggie: there was no indulgence, no fondness, such as she imagined when she fashioned

> the world afresh in her own thoughts. In books there were people who were always agreeable or tender, and delighted to do things that made one happy, and who did not show their kindness by finding fault. The world outside the books was not a happy one, Maggie felt: it seemed to be a world where people behaved the best to those they did not pretend to love, and that did not belong to them. And if life had no love in it, what else was there for Maggie. (Bk.3,v)

It is a collapse of Maggie's microcosm, and she cannot find solace in the dream world of novels because there are no more books to serve as opium. Her sorrow is compounded by her terrible loneliness. Of all George Eliot's heroines, she is the loneliest. Esther has her Felix, Dorothea her Ladislaw, Gwendolen her Daniel, but at thirteen "when the soul is made up of wants, and has no long memories, no superadded life in the life of others," Maggie has neither a mentor nor anyone with whom she can share her feelings. At the same time, being inadequately prepared for her ordeal by her inexperience and meagre education, she is not in a position to digest the lesson which everyone learns when "quite young" that our happiness

> lies entirely within, in our own mental and bodily state which determines for us the influence of everything outward--becomes a daily lesson to be learned, and learned with much stumbling as we get older. And until we know our friends' private thoughts and emotions we hardly know what to grieve or rejoice over for them.[10]

As Maggie is mentally not yet ready to see her conflicts as part of her egoism, her disenchantment, which is intensified by her sense of isolation, is made unbearable from that sense of dislocation which, rising from within, shatters the inside as well as the outside life:

> Maggie's sense of loneliness, and utter privation of joy, had deepened with the brightness of advancing spring. All the favourite outdoor nooks about home, which seemed to have done their part with her parents in nurturing and cherishing her, were now mixed up with the home--sadness, and gathered no smile from the sunshine. Every affection, every delight the poor child had had, was like an aching nerve to her. There was no music for her any more--no delicilus stringed instruments, with their passionate cries of imprisoned spirits sending a strange vibration through her frame. (Bk.4,iii)

Her suffering is all the more tragic because she has only a dim notion of what she needs; unlike Adam Bede who wants men to be useful or Dorothea Brooke who is anxious to improve the condition of mankind, Maggie has only a dim consciousness of a "wide hopeless yearning for that something, whatever it was, that was greatest and best on this earth" (Bk.4,iii). Meanwhile, she has lost faith in the comfort of her Idionic dream world, although she still, at times, thinks that she could have been contented with "absorbing fancies," and that "if she could have had all Scott's novels and Byron's poems, she could perhaps make dream-worlds of her own." But unfortunately for her, she has passed the age when driving nails into her toy or escaping to the gypsies could substitute for reality. She has attained semi-consciousness, and can no longer escape demanding an "explanation of this hard, real life. . . some key that would enable her to understand, and, in understanding endure, the heavy weight that had fallen on her young heart." Like Dorothea Brooke, she begins to imagine that "if she had been taught 'real learning and wisdom, such as great men knew,' she should have held the secrets of life; if she had only books, that she might learn for herself what wise men knew" (Bk.4,iii). As for Dorothea, semi-consciousness leads to a hunger for more knowledge which would help her to resolve the riddle of life. But the smattering of Latin, Euclid, and Logic garnered from Tom's dry school-books cannot assuage her "yearning for effectual wisdom" which will liberate her from her narrow world. Her "discouragement", therefore, can only deepen "as the days went on, and the eager heart gained faster and faster on the patient mind." She needs a mediator between her and the moral universe towards which she is unconsciously groping. This mediator must be a sympathetic mentor like Daniel Deronda, who can penetrate the loneliness of her innermost heart. It is thus her psychological need which suggests the next movement of the novel, for she is able to locate her mentor in Thomas à Kempis who readily establishes a heart to heart relationship with her:

> Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. . . . If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything some what will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee. . . . Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross: and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown. . .

> If thou desire to mount unto this height, thou must set out courageously, and lay the axe to the root, that thou mayest pluck up and destroy that hidden inordinate inclination to thyself, and unto all private and earthly good. . . . Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the more heavy suffering of others, that thou mayest the easier bear Thy little adversities. . . . (Bk.4,iii)

De Imitatione Christi, the narrator says, "passed through Maggie while she read, as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music, telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was in stupor."[11] Contact with Thomas à Kempis has a regenerating influence and is therefore an important turning point in the life of Maggie. The injunction to "pluck up and destroy that hidden inordinate inclination to thyself" strikes at the nucleus of her personal conflicts; it is an attempt to define to her, her selfishness. I underscore this point because it is the main tenet of my thesis that the pattern of George Eliot's novels is derived from the conflict of a character's Idione and Hieria, that is, between the selfish and altruistic elements that coexist in a character.

But egoism is not rooted out by a single contact with a moral agent. I have hinted earlier that Maggie can go from extreme sensuousness to extreme asceticism. She has not yet given up the hope to be honoured "for her surpassing attainment" (Bk.4,iii), and she quickly sees in Thomas à Kempis a vehicle by which she can attain the glory of a martyr. Her selfish imitation of the saint's life is represented satirically: "she was too ardently learning to see all nature and life in the light of her new faith, to need any other material for her mind to work on" (Bk.4,iii). Elsewhere, the narrator is openly critical of her egoism: "From what you know of her, you will not be surprised that she threw some exaggeration and wilfulness, some pride and impetuosity, even into her self-renunciation: her own life was still a drama for her, in which she demanded of herself that her part should be played with intensity." She does not find it easy to give up the idea that she is the center of the world. "The path of martyrdom and endurance," which she seeks is the one "where the palm-branches grow, rather than the steep highway of tolerance, just allowance, and self-blame, where there are no leafy honours to be gathered and worn" (Bk.4,iii). However, although her renunciation is only partial, Thomas à Kempis does impose on her a novel conception of morality--the morality of selfless service. She can never be the old Maggie again. She will now be moving gradually towards her Hieria.

Meanwhile, because of the way she thinks, her newly acquired religion leads to a fatal division between her passionate and intellectual lives. She makes great efforts to suppress her emotions. The usually perceptive Philip warns her against false asceticism: "You are shutting yourselves up in a narrow self delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness all the highest powers of your nature" (Bk.5,iii).[12] Philip uses the plural pronoun to remind Maggie of her tragic division and its consequences, and from that insight and foreboding which concerned love generates, he is able to predict her future troubles: "You will be thrown into the world some day, and then every rational satisfaction of your nature that you deny now, will assault you like a savage appetite" (Bk.5,iii). Philip's warning anticipates her future relationship with Stephen Guest. Even while she speaks of renunciation to Philip, her indomitable passionate life is already asserting itself through the memory of a music that swells out again, "like chimes borne onward by a recurrent breeze" (Bk.5,i).[13]

The dissociation of sensibilities which is the inevitable result of Maggie's selfish zeal for martyrdom decides the structure of the rest of the novel, from Book 5 to the end; from henceforth the struggle is for unity of the heroine either in the resigned intellectual life of Philip or in the turbulence of Stephen's passion.[14] The change in structure is in accordance with George Eliot's technique of depicting a character through what goes on in his mind.

At first, Maggie leans in the direction of Philip with whom she temporarily shares her inner life because his nature, "half feminine in sensitiveness,. . . had some of the woman's intolerant repulsion towards worldliness and the deliberate pursuit of sensual enjoyment" (Bk.5,iii). Unsatisfactory as her relationship with Philip is, it provides intellectual and emotional outlets for her. When, therefore, it is abruptly terminated by Tom, Maggie experiences a despair akin to that which preceded her first disenchantment:

> Maggie went up to her own room to pour out all that indignant remonstrance, against which Tom's mind was close barred, in bitter tears. Then. . . came the recollection of that quiet time before the pleasure which had ended in to-day's misery had perturbed the clearness and simplicity of her life. She used to think in that time that she had made great conquests, and won a lasting stand on serene heights above worldly temptations and conflict. And here she was down again in the thick of a hot strife with her own and others' passion. Life was not so short, then, and perfect rest was not so near as she had dreamed when she was two years younger. There was more struggle for her--perhaps more falling. (Bk.5,v)[15]

This second disenchantment does bring about the recognition that the real world is much too complex to be comprehended in a single formula, such as the one she constructs from her understanding of Thomas à Kempis. Her experience at this point is, in a very limited way, analogous to Adam Bede's who thinks, after the tragic death of his father, that he has acquired experience and knowledge sufficient to guide his future. But when the calamity of Hetty strikes, his belief in himself is shattered and he realizes that he has a need for outside help. Maggie's loss of Philip has not only exposed the insufficiency of her newly acquired faith, but has also created a yearning vacuum, which may be filled either by reuniting her two sides or by giving herself entirely to her Idione. Unfortunately, it is her Idione which initially gains control of her; for as she slips back "into desire and longing," she finds her work "distasteful", and the desire for "the varied life she yearned for, and despaired of" becomes "more and more importunate" (Bk.4,ii).

Her yearning is not satisfied by her distasteful drudgery in a "third-rate schoolroom", which only whets her appetite for the sensuous life that now seems forever lost, and hence prepares her heart to feel in the rather mediocre world of Stephen Guest "the half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight, made up of vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read, or had ever woven in her dreamy reveries" (Bk.7,iii). Through the desires of her sensuous side, she is led to Stephen Guest.

In view of George Eliot's insistence that Maggie's "position towards Stephen is too vital a part of my whole conception and purpose for me to be converted to the condemnation of it,"[16] and in view of the many criticisms which Stephen has attracted,[17] it will not be out of place to make a brief observation about this vital character at this point.

Stephen shares some of the qualities of Arthur Donnithorne: both are idle young men of fortune and great expectations, both are attractive to young, inexperienced women, both are unconsciously egocentric. Unlike Arthur's, however, Stephen's egoism is not redeemed by any complementary sensitivity to public opinion. He chooses Lucy because of her relative mediocrity and from love of opposition. According to the narrator, "the emphasis of his admiration" for Lucy "did not fall precisely on the rarest quality in her--perhaps he approved his own choice of her chiefly because she did not strike him as a remarkable rarity." And he prefers her to Miss Leyburn, the daughter of the county member, because Lucy being "only the daughter of his father's subordinate," it will feed his pride to have "to defy and overcome a slight unwillingness and disappointment in his father and sisters--a circumstance" which, as the sarcastic voice of the narrator says, "gives a young man an agreeable consciousness of his own dignity. . . . He meant to choose Lucy: she was a little darling, and exactly the sort of woman he had always most admired" (Bk.6,i). His passion for Maggie has also an egocentric core; he likes her because she is a synthesis of "plain sewing," "poverty," and "beauty" --a rare combination which makes "Maggie more unlike other women even than she had seemed at first" (Bk.6,ii). He quarrels with Dr Kenn's Anglicanism because it will interfere with his parliamentary ambitions. As a "rising senator," rather too conscious of his great "gifts" with their corresponding "great responsibilities" (Bk.6,ii), he expects every other interest--that of Anglicanism and community--to be subordinated to his.

In spite of his egoism, however, he is never in doubt as to the nature of his relationship with Lucy. "He was in love, thoroughly attached to Lucy," he confesses to himself, "and engaged--engaged as strongly as an honourable man need be" (Bk.6,vi). He thinks that he is in love with Lucy, but he is in love with only himself. However, he is ostensibly attached to her and she believes that he is in love with her. For this reason, he is in honour bound to openly break his connection with Lucy before making love to her cousin. But I have already hinted that his professed love for Maggie is another aspect of his love for himself. If in Stephen's subsequent relationship with the heroine, George Eliot portrays sexual love,[18] she also portrays what is most objectionable in such a love--naked animal passion. Stephen constantly invokes, as a ground for lack of self control, the claim of what he calls natural law. "Natural law," he claims, "surmounts every other; we can't help what it clashes with."[19] When a man says that he "can't help" what his passion clashes with, he is a very long way from George Eliot's moral universe. On Stephen's impassioned cry for animalism, Maggie superimposes the claims of a divine moral universe: "we can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us--for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives" (Bk.6,xiv). Maggie's resistance shows that she is not an easy victim of Stephen's overmastering masculine appeal.

Maggie is thoroughly responsible for her actions. Her conduct at St Ogg's is in accord with the internal logic of her life. I have noted before that she is given to extremes.

Before the crucial meeting with Stephen she is under the control of her Idione--that sensuous side of her which craves "for love, wealth, ease, and refinement" (Bk.6,xiii). At the moment of surrender, she sees Stephen as the fulfilment of her dream world. The language of the passage in which she glides down the river with Stephen at her side shows her in her dream world in which she is finally recognized as a queen:

> Maggie felt that she was being led down the garden among the roses, being helped with firm tender care into the boat, having the cushion and cloak arranged for her feet, and her parasol opened for her (which she had forgotten)--all by this stronger presence that seemed to bear her along without any act of her own will, like the added self which comes with the sudden exalting influence of a strong tonic-- and she felt nothing else. Memory was excluded. (Bk.6, xiii)

The egoist thinks that he can avoid moral responsibility by shutting off memory. It is significant that Maggie's ride is described in imagery that is suggestive of dreamy forgetfulness: "They glided rapidly along, Stephen rowing, helped by the backward-flowing tide. . . . The breath of the young, unwearied day, the delicious rhythmic dip of the oars, the fragmentary song of a passing bird heard now and then, as if it were only the overflowing of brim-full gladness. . . what else could there be in their minds for the first hour?"

But as she awakes to recognition and consciousness on the Dutch boat, she is for the first time capable of isolating the selfish element of herself from the moral goodness to which she is aspiring:

> I feel no excuse for myself--none. I should never have failed towards Lucy and Philip as I have done, if I had not been weak, selfish, and hard--able to think of their pain without a pain to myself that would have destroyed all temptation. . .
>
> There are memories, and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me; they would never quit me for long; they would come back and be pain to me--repentance. I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God. I have caused sorrow already--I know--I feel it; but I have never deliberately consented to it. . . (Bk.6,xiv)

This recognition scene is an important turning point in the life of the heroine and in the events of The Mill on the Floss. Maggie's refusal to marry Stephen is based on a healthy synthesis of her moral and emotional lives. It is a solid triumph of her Hieria over her Idione. However, although she has come to a full consciousness of the moral implications of her actions, she is still innocent of public opinion:

> "Good God, Maggie!" said Stephen, rising too and grasping her arm, "You rave. How can you go back without marrying me? You don't know what will be said, dearest. You see nothing as it really is."
>
> "Yes, I do. But they will believe me. I will confess everything. Lucy will believe me--she will forgive you, and--and--oh, some good will come by clinging to the right." (Bk.6,xiv)

Lucy and Philip indeed do believe her, but St Ogg's does not. Philip's compassionate letter to her is reminiscent of her earlier analysis of the unfortunate witch's ambivalent plight. By emphasizing the "partial, divided action of our nature," he not only generalizes Maggie's experience on the

Dutch boat, but also shows how only the vision of tragedy can restore wholeness to her, just as the vision of heaven was to be the only form of victory granted the witch: "I could see no issue that was not fatal for you," he says, "I believed then, as I believe now, that the strong attraction which drew you together proceeded only from one side of your characters, and belonged to that partial, divided action of our nature which makes half the tragedy of the human lot" (Bk.7,iii).[20]

The most rapid scene in the novel[21] is the one of Maggie's last disenchantment, which comes immediately after her interview with Dr Kenn. It is a dramatization of the moment to moment movement of her agitated mind as she walks "back to her lodgings, through the driving rain, with a new sense of desolation. She must be a lonely wanderer; she must go out among fresh faces. . . There was no home, no help for the erring: even those who pitied were constrained to hardness" (Bk.7,v). At this moment of total isolation and unrelenting suffering comes Stephen's letter, renewing his offer of marriage. The offer makes her feel "as if her real temptations had only just begun." It resurrects the passionate hopes that she had abandoned on the Mudport boat:

> All the day before she had been filled with the vision of a lonely future through which she must carry the burden of regret, upheld only by clinging faith. And here--close within her reach--urging itself upon her even as a claim--was another future, in which hard endurance and effort were to be exchanged for easy delicious leaning on another's loving strength!

A moment of silence succeeds this hopeful dream and then come once more

> the memories that no passion could long quench: the long past came back to her, and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve. The words that were marked by the quiet hand in the little old book that she had long ago learned by heart rushed even to her lips, and found a vent for themselves in a low murmur that was quite lost in the loud driving of the rain against the window and the loud moan and roar of the wind.[22] "I have received the Cross, I have received it from Thy hand; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as Thou has laid it upon me."

Maggie is given another chance. Stephen's letter functions as a test of her moral growth. But this time, instead of shutting off memory, she uses it to reach her Hieria. With her mind freed from the domination of her Idione, she is able to foresee her lover's true future happiness in Lucy and not in herself, for whom renunciation can no longer take the path of glory. "Forgive me Stephen," she sobs, "It will pass away. You will come back to her." With this follows her climatic act of supreme sacrifice: "She took up the letter, held it to the candle, and let it burn slowly on the hearth." The act is followed by a reaffirmation of her acceptance of suffering, "I will bear it, and bear it till death . . . God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort." In this final cry, she has fused her Idione and Hieria with the moral universe, and can now notice beneath her "knees and feet" the flood which will soon conduct her to her God.[23]

With the coming of the flood comes also a resurgence of Maggie's wholesome emotions in the form of a "strong resurgent love towards her brother that swept away all the later impressions of hard, cruel offence and misunderstanding, and left only the deep, underlying, unshakeable memories of early union." She unifies herself as she sits face to face with her alienated brother on the life-saving boat:

> Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face--Tom pale with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent. . . . But at last a mist gathered over the blue-grey eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter: the old childish-- "Magsie!" (Bk.7,v)

For Maggie it is a supreme moment, the end of a long quest to unite her moral life with her affection. Her subsequent death may be, as U.C. Knoepflmacher implies, a tragic waste,[24] but it is the only resolution which the logic of her divided nature can accept.[25] However, it is not her death that matters. It is enough that, through suffering and regeneration, she is able to emancipate herself from her narrow microcosm. In George Eliot, moral consciousness takes precedence of the length of life.

Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's as Microcosms

Surprised at the negative response with which the press greeted the Dodsons and the Tullivers, George Eliot could not help saying:

> "I have certainly fulfilled my intention very badly if I have made the Dodson honesty appear

> 'mean and uninteresting'. . . . So far as my own feeling and intention are concerned, no one class of persons or form of character is held up to reprobation or to exclusive admiration. Tom is painted with as much love and pity as Maggie; and I am so far from hating the Dodsons myself, that I am rather aghast to find them ticketed with such very ugly adjectives."26

The difference between the views of the author and those of her critics may be attributed to the contrast which Maggie's world makes with those of Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's. The world of Dorlcote Mill is centered on Mr Tulliver, an inveterate egoist whose actions originate in a feeling of self-importance. "He," the reader is told, "was held to be a much more substantial man than he really was. . . . He had been always used to hear pleasant jokes about his advantages as a man who worked his own mill, and owned a pretty bit of land; and these jokes naturally kept up his sense that he was a man of considerable substance (Bk.1,viii). In order to live up to his fame, he feels that he has to put down all opposition. He goes to law to stop his rivals from sharing the Floss with him; he marries a woman who is intellectually his inferior "'cause she was a bit weak, like; for I wasn't agoin' to be told the rights o'things by my own fireside" (Bk.i,iii), and he sends his son Tom to school partly because he does not want a competitor at the mill and partly because he wants to get even with his enemies, the lawyers. He is so occupied with his microcosm that the outside world becomes a riddle to him: "This is a puzzlin' world"

(Bk.1,iii), he often says.

Although he does not, like his father, conduct business on sentimental grounds, Tom totally accepts the values of his father's little world. In him tradition and prejudice replace the intellectual-emotional world that confronts the reader in Maggie. Thoroughly incapable of self-introspection, he is one of the numerous characters in The Mill on the Floss whose "motives run in fixed tracks" and who therefore "have no need to reconcile conflicting aims" (Bk.3,vii). His dialogue with Maggie shows the distance between the world of Dorlcote Mill and the moral world towards which Maggie is aspiring:

> "Now then, Maggie, there are but two courses for you to take; either you vow solemnly to me, with your hand on my father's Bible, that you will never have another meeting or speak another word in private with Philip Wakem, or you refuse, and I tell my father everything; and this month, when by my exertions he might be made happy once more, you will cause him the blow of knowing that you are a disobedient, deceitful daughter, who throws away her own respectability by clandestine meetings with the son of a man that has helped to ruin her father. Choose!" Tom ended with cold decision, going up to the large Bible, drawing it forward, and opening it at the fly-leaf, where the writing was.
>
> It was a crushing alternative to Maggie.
>
> "Tom," she said, urged out of pride into pleading, "don't ask me that. I will promise you to give up all intercourse with Philip, if you will let me see him once, or even to write to him and explain everything--to give it up as long as it would ever cause any pain to my father. . . I feel something for Philip too. He is not happy."
>
> "I don't wish to hear anything of your feelings; I have said exactly what I mean; choose--and quickly, lest my mother should come in."

> "If I give you my word, that will be as strong a bond to me as if I laid my hand on the Bible. I don't require that to bind me."
> "Do what _I_ require," said Tom. "I can't trust you, Maggie. . . Else you will bring shame on us all, and grief on my father; and what is the use of my exerting myself and giving up everything else for the sake of paying my father's debts, if you are to bring madness and vexation on him just when he might be easy and hold up his head once more?"
> "Oh, Tom--will the debts be paid soon?" said Maggie, clasping her hands, with a sudden flash of joy across her wretchedness.
> "If things turn out as I expect," said Tom. "But," he added, his voice trembling with indignation, "while I have been contriving and working that my father may have some peace of mind before he dies--working for the respectability of our family--you have done all you can to destroy both."
> Maggie felt a deep movement of compunction: for the moment, her mind ceased to contend against what she felt to be cruel and unreasonable, and in her self-blame she justified her brother.
> "Tom," she said in a low voice, "it was wrong of me--but I was so lonely--and I was sorry for Philip."
> "Nonsense!" said Tom. "Your duty was clear enough. Say no more; but promise, in the words I told you." (Bk.5,v)

In the egocentric world of Dorlcote Mill, thought and affection are displaced by family pride and a traditional quest for respectability. Maggie's desire for the independence of felt thought is ridiculed.

Like Dorlcote Mill, St Ogg's too is an isolated microcosm that "did not look extensively before or after. It inherited a long past without thinking of it, and had no eyes for the spirits that walk the streets" (Bk.1,xii). At the time of _The Mill on the Floss_, it is cut off intellectually and emotionally from its past, from its vital link with humanity at large. Thrift and industry is for St Ogg's what family pride is for Dorlcote Mill.

The two families that most represent the values of St Ogg's are the Dodsons and the Wakems. The Dodsons' actions originate in what the narrator calls "a proud honest egoism, which had a hearty dislike to whatever made against its own credit and interest." Their virtues are selected to promote their business interests: "obedience to parents, faithfulness to kindred, industry, rigid honesty, thrift, the thorough scouring of wooden and copper utensils, the hoarding of coins likely to disappear from the currency, the production of first-rate commodities for the market, and the general preference for whatever was home-made" (Bk.4,i). The outside world is as much a riddle to the Dodsons and Wakems as it is to Mr Tulliver. When Mrs Tulliver talks of "nat'ral feeling" (Bk.3,vii) and private sorrows, lawyer Wakem fails to understand her, and rightly asks "What does all this mean, Mrs Tulliver?" They live in separate worlds and cannot understand each other.

As I have noted elsewhere, there is a reciprocal relationship between society and character. The community grows in moral consciousness with the characters. In The Mill on the Floss only Maggie and Philip make significant moral gains. A marriage between these two would not only have united the worlds of Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's, but would have also brought the communities closer to their

Hieria. Although Maggie does not marry Philip, her sacrificial death, while rescuing a brother who has renounced her, is a symbolic effort to superimpose a higher moral order on the worlds of Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's.

Chapter IV

Silas Marner

After citing George Eliot's letter to John Blackwood on how the idea of Silas Marner came to her "as a sort of legendary tale,"[1] Gerald Bullett energetically concludes that "the result is the happiest blend of romantic allegory with homely realism."[2] Critic after critic has been similarly intrigued by George Eliot's deceptively simple statement. F.R. Leavis contends that "Silas Marner has in it, in its solid way, something of the fairy-tale."[3] Ian Milner finds the "full meaning" of the novel in the tension between its "legendary" and "realistic" components,[4] while U.C. Knoepflmacher calls it a "wishful fantasy designed to help the author purge herself of the fears that had surfaced in 'The Lifted Veil' and The Mill on the Floss."[5]

David Carroll is, however, closer to the heart of Silas Marner in his observation that "Silas's fifteen years of very real bitterness and isolation rule out the suggestion that his is a different kind of world from Godfrey's, a world in which the logic of the everyday life is suspended."[6]

The association of the novel with the "fairy-tale" stems, in part, from George Eliot's letter, but mainly from an incomplete comprehension of the author's psychological method. The "legendary tale" of the letter refers only to the kernel idea and not to the conception of the story. "As my mind dwelt on the subject," says George Eliot in the same letter, "I became inclined to a more realistic treatment."[7] Silas Marner is conceived from the psychology of Silas and Godfrey, whose misguided conceptions of life furnish its underlying structure. David Carroll notes, very appropriately, that Silas and Godfrey have essentially kind natures which are easily exploited and embittered, and that both characters simplify life and tend to explain it in terms of "miracle or chance."[8] Silas Marner is constructed on the efforts of Silas and Godfrey to interpret life in terms of religion and chance respectively. Just as the egoist in George Eliot is self-centered on matters that pertain to his ego, Silas and Godfrey are respectively egocentric on points of religion and chance (the two terms are virtually interchangeable in Silas Marner), because their early lives are built on them. Lantern Yard religion is as real to Silas[9] as the religion of chance is to Godfrey. In the following pages, I shall be concerned with the microcosms which Silas and Godfrey construct from their respective religions.

Silas Marner

As I have observed earlier in this thesis, an exclusive preoccupation with a single object of interest is the essence of the George Eliot egoist. The religion of the Lantern Yard is a self-centered one, which excludes its devotee from a larger communion with humanity, from the accumulated human knowledge which is man's common inheritance, and from the stronger light of the day.[10] Like his fellow worshippers, Silas is incorporated in a "narrow religious sect," because it is a place "where the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech, and has, at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community." Silas's egoism is highly flattered in this community. "Marner," the narrator says, "was highly thought of in that little hidden world. . . he was believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith." His very weakness, his cataleptic seizures, becomes a matter for veneration and a phenomenon of "spiritual" and, of course, personal significance: "Silas was evidently a brother selected for a peculiar discipline; . . . it was believed by himself and others that its effect was seen in an accession of light and fervour" (i).[11]

Silas Marner's microcosm, like Amos Barton's, is the one in which he occupies a mid-way position between God and an elected band of worshippers. But whereas Rev Barton's little world is punctured by his helpless dependence on Milly, Silas Marner's has no window to the macrocosm that envelops it. Even his inherited medical skill, which ought to form a bridge between him and humanity, is sacrificed to his all engulfing religious life:

> He had inherited from his mother some acquaintance with medicinal herbs and their preparation--a little store of wisdom which she had imparted to him as a solemn bequest--but of late years he had had doubts about the lawfulness of applying this knowledge, believing that herbs could have no efficacy without prayer, and that prayer might suffice without herbs; so that his inherited delight to wander through the fields in search of foxglove and dandelion and coltsfoot, began to wear to him the character of a temptation. (i)

His egoism is of a quiet unassuming variety that blends well into his state of childlike innocence and inexperience. He "finds hard words in his hymn-book" and "knows nothing of abstractions; as the little child knows nothing of parental love, but only knows one face and one lap towards which it stretches its arms for refuge and nurture" (ii). The passage is very significant from the point of view of the author's psychological conception of Silas Marner. It shows the disposition of a mind that is soon to be exploited by William Deane: while the reference to "little child" anticipates Silas's future relationship with Eppie. W.J. Harvey observes, rather perceptively, that "the vehicle of the comparison clearly looks forward to a state of affairs which will actually develop in the story," and that there is a close symbolic relationship between this passage and the yet "unearned guineas" which Marner thinks "fondly of . . . as if they had been unborn children" (ii).[12]

Silas's mind, with its childlike notion of things, is not only incapable of analyzing its own egoism, but is quite unprepared for adult responsibilities. When tragedy strikes, in the form of William Deane's false accusation, it can only seek refuge in the God whose favourite son Silas still thinks he is. "God will clear me," he declares. This instinctive declaration summarizes his entire idea of morality, and hence he is stunned when his innocence is not vindicated. "There is no just God that governs the earth righteously," he cries in anguish, "but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent" (i).

His loss of belief in a just God signifies the collapse of his microcosm which has depended on a healthy faith in a benevolent deity that has hitherto recognized his central position at Lantern Yard. Jerome Thale draws attention to the fact that Silas's blasphemy--his disbelief in any god but a malevolent one--is important not as a theological proposition, but as an indication of some change in his personality. "What he has lost," he continues, "is not a creed but a sense of the world."[13]

Adam Bede similarly questions the existence of "a just God" when stunned by Hetty's suffering.[14] But unlike Adam, Silas cannot articulate his problem. Adam gains in knowledge from his experience because he has around him people in whom he can confide; Silas's experience destroys his personality because he has no trusted mentor who can interpret it to him and he is too limited in intellect and sensibility to understand the riddles of actual existence. He abandons the scene of his disenchantment with "that despair in his soul--that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature" (i). Unlike any other hero or heroine of George Eliot, his disenchantment leaves no avenue that can lead to regeneration. He is even lonelier than Maggie Tulliver, cut off, as he is, from his past, present, and future:

> He hated the thought of the past; there was nothing that called out his love and fellowship . . . and the future was all dark, for there was no Unseen Love that cared for him. Thought was arrested by utter bewilderment, now its old narrow pathway was closed, and affection seemed to have died under the bruise that had fallen on its keenest nerves. (ii)

He seeks exile precisely for the reason which makes Maggie Tulliver repudiate it; he seeks it for its "Lethean influence . . . in which the past becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished, and the present too is dreamy, because it is linked with no memories" (ii). Without a sense of his past he can only become "a dead man come to life again" (i), because his isolation from a necessary life stream has gradually petrified his senses. For fifteen years he tries to lead a life in which an instinctive labour pattern displaces a moral one that creates a healthy existence. The author uses the imagery of a spinning insect to recreate for the reader this period of the hero's history, and to show that total loss of sensibility in the hero which can only be reclaimed through the gradual action of the "remedial influences of pure, natural human relation":[15]

> He seemed to weave, like the spider, from pure impulse without reflection. . . . Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. Then there were the calls of hunger; and Silas, in his solitude, had to provide his own breakfast, dinner and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire; and all these immediate promptings helped, along with the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. (ii)

The imagery suggests the totally selfish life of a mute, inarticulate, paralyzed mind. But Silas's emotional relationship with his brown pot, with which he has associated for twelve years, not only shows that his affection is not totally annihilated, but also that he cannot exist in total isolation for long. When the earthenware breaks, he picks up its shattered pieces "with grief in his heart." The narrator reminds the reader that "even in this stage of withering. . . the sap of affection was not all gone" (ii). This is an important reminder and it anticipates the series of emotional incidents that lead to Silas's eventual regeneration.

The first of these is his sympathy for the dropsical Sally Oates which brings a temporary sense of unity between his past and present: "Silas felt, for the first time since he had come to Raveloe, a sense of unity between his past and present life, which might have been the beginning of his rescue from the insect-like existence into which his nature had shrunk." Unfortunately, however, the narrow superstitious outlook of Raveloe turns this "movement of pity towards Sally Oates, which had given him a transient sense of brotherhood" into a bugbear that serves to heighten "the repulsion between him and his neighbours and made his isolation more complete" (ii).

A second important step towards regeneration is incident to the loss of his money. Rev Crackenthorp admonishes him "that his money had probably been taken from him because he thought too much of it and never came to church" (x). This is a strong moral indictment. In Raveloe, unlike the industrial district from which Silas has emigrated, the church and the Rainbow Inn are communal places which symbolize a larger moral universe. The Church, which the gentle Dolly Winthrop describes to Silas, is certainly not a place presided over by an omnipotent God who ministers to the egoistic demands of the individual, but a gathering place, like the Rainbow, where one sheds one's egoism. It is a place where "if a bit o'trouble comes, I feel as I can put up wi' it, for I've looked for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up at the last; and if we'n done our part, it isn't to be believed as Them as are above as 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o'Theirn'n" (x).

David Carroll points out relevantly that Silas's inability to "identify the Raveloe religion with his old faith" shows the narrowness of his world.[16] But as a nature like Silas's cannot live in independence of a self-centered religion, he soon creates one for himself in the worship of golden guineas:

> He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded outline between his thumb and fingers, and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children. (ii)

He clings to this new religion with an instinctive tenacity akin to his emotional attachment to the deity of the Lantern Yard, and hence he cannot comprehend Dolly's more liberal theology, which falls "rather unmeaningly" on his ears, "for there was no word in it that could rouse a memory of what he had known as religion" (x).

When he loses his gold, he is as shocked as he was when he lost the Lantern Yard religion. Ironically, however, the new shock revives the current of emotion which the old one had benumbed into recision: "He put his tembling hands to his head, and gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation." The screaming dramatically bursts open the cocoon of his egoistic microcosm, and a few moments later he is out in the streets to seek the aid of humanity. However, he has lingering doubts to conquer; a long rooted faith is not to be easily destroyed by a single emotional outburst:

> Was it a thief who had taken the bags? or was it a cruel power that no hands could reach which had delighted in making him a second

> time desolate? He shrank from this vaguer dread, and fixed his mind with struggling effort on the robber with hands, who could be reached by hands. (v)

By rejecting the vague agency of "a cruel power", he is able to triumph over a superstition which holds his knowledge in bondage, and by seeking the help of his fellow men, in order to apprehend the thief who has stolen his gold, he ceases to see himself as the favoured son of God. At the Rainbow Inn, for the first time in fifteen years, he enjoys the warmth of human relationship, sitting by "a hearth not his own, and feeling the presence of faces and voices which were his nearest promise of help" (vii). This contact does for him what Milly's death does for Amos Barton: it brings him the much needed sympathy of Raveloe. The "repulsion" which he has "always created in his neighbours," says the narrator, is "partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune had shown him" (x).

In spite of these new sympathies, however, Silas's desiccated feeling needs the unjarring tenderness of a child for its total revival. The only permanent contribution which the loss of his money makes to his emotional growth is that of creating a yearning gap which is filled almost immediately by Eppie:

> Formerly, his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in darkness, with his prop utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him it must come from without. (x)

And help--in the form of a mute child--is already on the doorstep:

> He seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!--his own gold--brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. (xii)

His mind is yet too incoherent to think logically. It can only think, symbolically, in terms of gold with which it is familiar. It is for this reason that Silas is mystified when his stretched fingers make contact with agreeable "soft warm curls" instead of encountering recalcitrant pieces of metal. This sense of mystery gradually works in him to revive memories which prepare him for human contact:

> In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child--a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream--his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. . . . Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories . . . he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe--old quiverings of tenderness--old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had found no conjectures of ordinary natural means by

which the event could have been brought about. (xii)

What is dramatized in this scene is not "coincidence",[17] but the revival of Silas's memory. The hero's reaction to Eppie's presence underscores the point which my thesis makes that action in George Eliot is determined by what goes on in the character's mind. With the coming of Eppie comes a change in the plot of the novel. The Silas and Godfrey stories which hitherto have been running along parallel lines become intertwined through the introduction of Eppie.

Eppie is of crucial importance both for the human contact and the sense of awe which she brings to Silas's life. Silas is gradually detached from his ego, and led in the direction of his Hieria. He intuitively identifies Eppie with his purer nature, and his strong objection to her being taken away from him is an unconscious clinging to his moral life. "No--no--I can't part with it, I can't let it go," said Silas abruptly. "It's come to me -- I've a right to keep it."

"The proposition to take the child from him," comments the narrator, "had come to Silas quite unexpectedly, and his speech uttered under a strong sudden impulse, was almost like a revelation to himself: a minute before, he had no distinct intention about the child" (xiii). But his speech is only apparently impulsive. In reality it derives from a synthesis of his purer pristine nature and his newly found moral life. The speech, observes David Carroll, uttered "under a strong sudden impulse" is "instinctive" and "expressive" of his "whole moral tradition."[18] But it is "instinctive" only in the sense that Eppie has, in a brief period of time, become an integral part of Silas's physical and spiritual lives. The pauses between the strong "No's" of the speech show reflection. The choice which, as the narrator indicates, is made unconsciously, is certainly a moral one.

Another contribution of Eppie, as I mentioned before, is the sense of awe which she introduces to the prosaic, gnarled life of her adoptive parent. "Her wide-gazing calm," as the narrator says, inspires "a certain awe such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky --before a steady glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway" (xiii). This new sense of awe is different from that inspired by the malevolent Lantern Yard deity. It is an aesthetic awe--observe that it is associated with harmonious objects of nature--generated spontaneously by the presence of noble womanhood, as a "necessary complement to the truth and beauty of life."[19] It is akin to that which Maggie inspires in Bob Jakin or Romola in the plague-ridden villagers. An ability to apprehend beautiful objects is a necessary step, in George Eliot, towards a wholesome existence. Eppie's infantine beauty operates as a remedial influence on Silas's senses. "Eppie called him away from his weaving," we are told, "and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life, even to the old winter-flies that came crawling forth in the early spring sunshine, and warming him into joy because she had joy" (xiv). Some of the most delightful scenes in Silas Marner are those that describe Silas's dual function as a parent and a governess, particularly his half-hearted attempt to discipline his mischievous ward by throwing her into a coal-hole. Such scenes depict the gradual process by which the mind of the lonely weaver is reconditioned and reintroduced into the joys and sorrows of a healthy family life. Reflecting on Silas's new advantages, the narrator says:

> The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself; but Eppie,was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager pacing towards the same blank limit --carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years. . . . (xiv)

The contrast also indicates the moral and intellectual distances that exist between his egoistic microcosm and the broader universe to which he is being led by a baby. However, his newly found life is still encumbered by a residual egoism, which makes his regeneration incomplete. He confesses to Eppie that he might "lose the feeling that God was good to me" if he lost her (xix). But it is George Eliot's cardinal teaching that true morality should be independent of any system of rewards.[20] The good Dolly Winthrop, who acts as his moral mid-wife, stresses this point when she says that

> all as we've got to do is trusten, Master Marner--to do the right thing as fur as we know, and to trusten. For if us as knows so little can see a bit o' good and rights, we may be sure as there's a good and a rights bigger nor what we know--I feel it i' my own inside as it must be so. And if you could but ha' gone on trustening Master Marner, you wouldn't ha' run away from your fellow-creaturs and been so lone. (xvi)

Dolly's admonition circumscribes the nature of Silas's Idione--loss of confidence in an idea of justice or goodness which is independent of one's selfish wishes or expectations. The scene shows him the way to reach his Hieria, and also prepares him for the crucial confrontation with Godfrey Cass. In spite of this preparation however, his Idione quickly reassets itself when Godfrey threatens to remove the object of its moral transformation:

> "Then, sir," he answered, with an accent of bitterness that had been silent in him since the memorable day when his youthful hope had perished--"then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen years ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o'coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in." (xix)

Godfrey's subsequent appeal to Eppie's future well-being, though palpably hypocritical, touches the well of humanity that Eppie and Dolly have rejuvenated in Silas, and which can no longer be totally obliterated by his Idione:

> Silas, on the other hand, was again stricken in conscience, and alarmed lest Godfrey's accusation should be true--lest he should be raising his own will as an obstacle to Eppie's good. For many moments he was mute, struggling for the self-conquest necessary to the uttering of difficult words. (xix)

But he does eventually triumph over his egoism. "I'll say no more," he says resignedly. "Let it be as you will. Speak to the child. I'll hinder nothing." This is a fitting climax to Silas's moral journey, and is appropriately complemented by Eppie's parallel surrender of her new prospects of wealth to the same ideal of human goodness which makes Silas give up his paternal claims to her:

> We've been used to be happy together everyday, and I can't think o' no happiness without him. And he says he'd nobody i' the world till I was sent to him, and he'd have nothing when I was gone. And he's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me.

Eppie's speech is a spontaneous outpouring of that experience which is a logical outcome of her life with Silas. The simplicity of its truthfulness makes Godfrey's legal claim look ridiculous. It exposes the coarseness of bare materialism when it attempts to supplant human affection. George Eliot intends the same lesson when Maggie Tulliver refuses to marry Stephen at the expense of her affections, or when Esther Lyon prefers the poverty of love to the wretched abundance of Transome Court.

Godfrey Cass

"Godfrey Cass, with his life-long secret," claims Henry James, "is by right the hero of Silas Marner."[21] This is a relevant overstatement. It is not Godfrey's secret, but his dualism which is vital to the structure of the novel. He is tragically divided between his Hieria and Idione. His Hieria, with its "need of some tender permanent affection" and "longing for some influence that would make the good he preferred easy to pursue", gravitates in the direction of the neat "purity and liberal orderliness" of the beautiful Nancy Lammeter (iii). But his Idione, habitually inclined to indolence, irresoluteness, "excitement of sporting, drinking, and card playing" draws him towards the diabolical Dunstan and the drunken Molly Farren. However, he cannot be the hero because the novel's essential action is not based on this conflict of his two natures, but rather on the effect which the aberrations of his wanton Idione have on Silas Marner, whose egoism, as we have seen, provides a structural sinew for the novel.

Like Arthur Donnithorne's, Godfrey's lazy and dilatory Idione creates for itself a microcosm in which self-gratification is the norm and chance the vehicle by which it is sustained. When confronted with a moral choice, he seeks refuge in a coy hope for some "unforeseen turn of fortune, some favourable chance which would save him from unpleasant consequences--even justify his insincerity by manifesting its prudence" (ix).[22] The narrator relevantly observes that "Favourable Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in" and that the "evil principle deprecated in this religion, is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind." This is an important statement on the nature of Godfrey's egoism and is significant to the structure of the novel, because by showing that "religion" plays just as a major role in the affairs of Godfrey as it does in Silas Marner's, the narrator psychologically unifies the parallel stories of the characters.[23] Furthermore, the generalized reference to "the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind" is very relevant to the topic of my thesis. A character is what he thinks at any given moment. And through the process of thought, the character consciously or unconsciously isolates himself socially and morally in a narrow world or microcosm. The psychological assumptions which Silas and Godfrey respectively make about their relationship with the world around them constitute the major actions of Silas Marner.

To return to Godfrey, the observation which the narrator makes about his psychology is an introduction to a crucial drama in his mind:

> Godfrey stood, still with his back to the fire, uneasily moving his fingers among the contents of his side-pockets, and looking at the floor. . . . His natural irresolution and moral cowardice were exaggerated by a position in which dreaded

> consequences seemed to press equally on all sides, and his irritation had no sooner provoked him to defy Dunstan and anticipate all possible betrayals, than the miseries he must bring on himself by such a step seemed more unendurable to him than the present evil. The results of confession were not contingent, they were certain; whereas betrayal was not certain. From the near vision of that certainty he fell back on suspense and vacillation with a sense of repose. The disinherited son of a small squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg, was almost as helpless as an uprooted tree, which, by the favour of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk on the spot where it first shot upward . . . he could imagine no future for himself on the other side of confession but that of "'listing for a soldier"--the most desperate step, short of suicide in the eyes of respectable families. No! he would rather trust to casualities than to his own resolve. . . . (iii)

This is a portrait of the mind of a lazy egoist. With Godfrey, moral decision is contingent on an egoistic calculus of pleasure that makes anticipated objects of future happiness the index of choice. Had he committed himself morally and made a confession of his marriage to Molly, the story of Silas Marner would have taken a different turn. But his failure to take a moral stand at a crucial period of his life leads to the crime and punishment on which the Silas part of the novel has to depend for its resolution. Instead of acting morally, he indulges in thoughts of the death of his antagonist:

> Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at the moment: it was, that the woman might not be dead. That was an evil terror--an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition; but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity. (xiii)

Because he is incapable of energetic action, he has to make providence do his dirty work for him. His wishes do not originate from impulse but from the cloddy clay of his egoism:

> "Is she dead?" said the voice that predominated over every other within him. "If she is, I may marry Nancy: and then I shall be a good fellow in future, and have no secrets, and the child--shall be taken care of somehow." (xiii)[24]

With this thought, he attains his moral nadir, and it is not at all surprising that he subsequently denies his daughter. In spite of himself, however, chance does eventually favour him, bestowing on him many years of bliss under the benign influence of the beautiful, but self-effacing Nancy Lammeter. Nancy, like Silas and Godfrey, is also superstitious. "She would have given up making a purchase at a particular place," says the narrator, "if, on three successive times, rain, or some other cause of Heaven's sending, had formed an obstacle; and she would have anticipated a broken limb or other heavy misfortune to anyone who persisted in spite of such indications" (xvii). She objects to her husband's initial proposal to adopt Eppie, because it is "not the will of Providence" or else He would have given them a child of their own. Consequently, she thinks the adoption will never turn out well.

But her simple religion of Providence is free from the indulgent egoism which characterizes her husband's or Marner's. Her relationship with her God is more akin to Dinah Morris's or Rev Tryan's. It is a relationship in which the ego is subordinated to the claims of duty and renunciation, and in which the character is thus sublimated in spite of the errors that may impinge on his faith. Because of her moral purity, Nancy functions in the novel as a mediator between Godfrey's egoistic microcosm and a wider ethical universe to which she ultimately conducts him:

> It was impossible to have lived with her fifteen years and not be aware that an unselfish clinging to the right, and a sincerity clear as the flower-born dew, were her main characteristics; indeed, Godfrey felt this so strongly, that his own more wavering nature, too averse to facing difficulty to be unvaryingly simple and truthful, was kept in a certain awe of this gentle wife who watched his looks with a yearning to obey them. (xvii)

By a gradual process, the touch of her gentle humanity brings Godfrey to the brink of moral consciousness, as he willingly confides in Nancy the details of his hidden moral depravity, which he would not want her to know either "by somebody else", or posthumously after his death. As a sincere confession is, in George Eliot, an act of confidence in a higher moral ideal, Godfrey's confidence in Nancy pulls him several steps towards his Hieria. However, repentance does not obliterate the facts of the past. Nancy cannot absolve him from the sins of his past. "But I wasn't worth doing wrong for--nothing is in this world"--she insists. "Nothing is so good as it seems before hand".

The concept, novel to Godfrey, that "nothing is worth doing wrong for" is at the heart of the novel, and is meant particularly to force the squire into recognizing the magnitude of the sins of his past life. Nancy's moral dictum is complemented by a reminder that wrongs done to Molly and Eppie are irremediable. But her husband, who is still only partially regenerate, believes that restitution is possible. What he, however, fancies to be restitution is an unconscious projection of the claims of his ego. Earlier, he had proposed to adopt Eppie because "it seemed an eminently appropriate thing" and because as "he had private motives for desiring it," the weaver, who is not really capable of "deep affections" because of his inferior social position, "would wish the best to the child he had taken so much trouble with, and would be glad that such good fortune should happen to her: she would always be very grateful to him" (xvii). He repeats this reasoned argument when Silas rejects his legal claim to Eppie: "I should have thought, Marner," he said severely--"I should have thought your affections for Eppie would make you rejoice in what was for her good, even if it did call upon you to give up something" (xix). His self-indulgent habit still deceives him into believing that what he desires for himself ought to be surrendered to him by others. He is not used as yet to considering the claims of others and hence he is unpleasantly surprised by the combined resistances of Silas and Eppie:

> Godfrey felt an irritation inevitable to almost all of us when we encounter an unexpected obstacle. He had been full of his own penitence

> and resolution to retrieve his error as far as the time was left to him; he was possessed with all-important feelings, that were to lead to a predetermined course of action which he had fixed on as the right, and he was not prepared to enter with lively appreciation into other people's feelings counteracting his virtuous resolves. (xix)

But through the efforts of Nancy, he is led to appreciate the moral justice of Eppie's rejection of him. "We can't alter her bringing up and what's come of it," Nancy tells him calmly. And this remonstration leads to a vital moment of recognition: "there's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by," he says. "While I've been putting off and putting off, the trees have been growing--it's too late now" (xx). The organic reference to growing "trees" is particularly appropriate, as it invokes the image of Silas and Eppie drawing nourishment from the same soil. Furthermore, it is a recognition of the symbolic nature of existence rooted in a moral soil that is not to be easily transferred. With this knowledge, Godfrey has taken a final step in the direction of his Hieria. Consequently, he is in a moral position to appreciate the goodness which he has enjoyed in spite of himself:

> And I got you, Nancy, in spite of all; and yet I've been grumbling and uneasy because I hadn't something else--as if I deserved it. (xx)

Nancy is to Godfrey what Eppie is to Silas. It is probably because of the similarity in the fortunes of Silas and Godfrey that George Eliot insists that the Nemesis "is a very mild one."[25] Godfrey is saved from the fates of Captains Wybrow and Arthur Donnithorne because of his love for Nancy Lammeter. Wybrow cannot love any one but himself, and Arthur has no Nancy to teach him; he has to learn the hard way. In fact, it is through the appreciation of what is good and noble in womanhood that Silas and Godfrey liberate themselves from their microcosms. Recognition of the good and noble in others serves, in the fictional worlds of George Eliot, as a mediator between the self and the moral universe.

Chapter V

Romola

Looking back on Romola fourteen years after its publication, George Eliot says, "there is no book of mine about which I more thoroughly feel I could swear by every sentence as having been written with my best blood, such as it is, and with the most ardent care for veracity of which my nature is capable."[1] Romola is George Eliot's first ambitious attempt to demonstrate the truth of her conception of art as a complex system of human relationships.[2]

In this novel, more than in any other fictional world of George Eliot, the author stresses man's relationships with his past, his art, his environment, and with the universe at large. Commenting on the breadth of the conception of Romola, based on a highly complex system of relationships, Richard H. Hutton observes that George Eliot's "drawings all require a certain space, like Raffael's Cartoons, and are not of that kind which produce their effect by the reiteration of scenes each complete in itself. You have to unroll a large surface of the picture before even the smallest unit of its effect is obtained."[3] The essayist insists significantly that his observation is "more true of Romola than of her English novels." Another contemporary critic, Richard Simpson, uses orchestral imagery to illustrate the complexity of the plot of the novel. George Eliot's plots, he says, "remind one of a group of detached figures in front of a crowded bas-relief; --or of a concerto where the melody is taken up first by one and then by another solo instrument, the orchestral playing the accompaniment. It is only in Romola that the author's plot has attained its full symphonic form, in which the orchestral parts become as important as the solos."[4] Simpson's analogy is more relevant to the plot of the novel than Henry James's criticism which explains it from the point of view of a single character--Tito Melema's.[5]

But the subject-matter of Romola is the same as for George Eliot's English novels:

> The great river-courses which have shaped the lives of men have hardly changed; and those other streams, the life-currents that ebb and flow in human hearts, pulsate to the same great needs, the same great loves and terrors. As our thought follows close in the slow wake of the dawn, we are impressed with the broad sameness of the human lot, which never alters in the main headings of its history--hunger and labour, seed-time and harvest, love and death.
> (Proem, 2)[6]

The author's insistence on "the broad sameness of the human lot" makes her particularly hostile to attitudes which tend to isolate men and women in narrow microcosms. The men and women of Romola are as self-centered in their pursuits as those of The Mill on the Floss or Adam Bede. The essential pattern of Romola is derived from the clash of the isolated microcosms of Romola, Tito, Savonarola, and of the Florentine political parties.[7] In this chapter of the thesis, I shall attempt an analysis of each character in his relation to the microcosm which his mind creates for him.

Romola

Although Romola has no well defined ambition or theory of life, like Dorothea Brooke, she is nevertheless as self-centered as Dorothea. The world image that evolves in her mind is the one in which she is surrounded by affectionate relations--father, husband, and kinsmen--who will recognize her great capacity for love and adore her for it. The most important actions of Romola are centered on the heroine's all-encompassing desire to unite affection and duty. The organizing principle of her life is love: "Again she felt that there could be no law for her but the law of her affections. That tenderness and keen fellow-feeling for the near and the loved which are the main ourgrowth of the affections, had made the religion of her life" (xxxvi).

Love is good, but when it is exclusive, it becomes egoistic. "All Romola's ardour," we are told, "had been concentrated in her affections" (xxxvii). Like Maggie Tulliver, whose actions are determined by her affections, Romola evolves a one-sided concept of the universe. Thomas Pinney rightly observes that "the ideal moral position frequently illustrated in the novels [of George Eliot] is that in which the laws of duty and affection coincide."[8] For these laws to coincide, the intellectual and the emotional lives must coexist in equal proportions. The conflicts of many of George Eliot's heroines--Maggie Tulliver, Romola, and Dorothea Brooke--arise from unconscious selfish efforts to separate the intellectual from the emotional faculty.

Romola's internal conflict--that between the laws of affection and duty--is the matrix in which the form of the novel is moulded. But at the beginning of the novel her affectionate side is dominated by her Idione. It is, in fact, what she thinks of Tito that makes Tito important. Tito's actions undoubtedly give vital life to the novel. But these actions receive form and meaning from what goes on in the mind of Romola or from what Tito imagines that Romola would think of them. "Romola," says the narrator, "only read her own pure thoughts" in the "dark depths" of Tito's eyes "as we read letters in happy dreams" (xvii). Elsewhere her "deep calm happiness encompassed Tito like the rich but quiet evening light which dissipates all unrest" (xii). The typical egoist, in George Eliot, often sees himself in others. Romola's ability to project herself into others is both an asset and a liability. While it enables her to understand and sympathize with others, it also makes her forget that others do have equivalent centres of selves. Consequently she is simultaneously altruistic and egoistic. At the beginning of the novel, her egoistic side, which is dominant, forces her to live in an isolated microcosm ruled by the laws of her affections.

The first serious challenge to her world comes from Dino, her brother and a pagan apostate who abandons a sister and a blind father in order "to prostrate himself under the influences of a dim mysticism which eludes all rules of human duty as it eludes all argument" (xii). Although convinced that "nothing could wipe out the long years of desertion," Romola goes to see her dying brother, hoping that her action may induce in him a feeling of repentance which might once more reconcile affection with duty. Apropos of her nature, she projects her feelings into her brother's: "Dino would pour out some natural filial feeling; he would ask questions about his father's blindness--how rapidly it had come on? how the long dark days had been filled? What the life was now in the home where he himself had been nourished?--and the last message from the dying lips would be one of tenderness and regret" (xv). In these thoughts, Romola is cataloguing the contents of her microcosm, a microcosm that does not include anything that is not affectionate. It is therefore logical that she should be unpleasantly surprised when Dino, equally selfish in his dim visions, puts up claims of a religious duty:

> "Dino, I thought you had some words to send to my father. You forsook him when his sight was failing; you made his life very desolate. Have you never cared about that? Never repented? What is this religion of yours, that places visions before natural duties?"

Fra Luca does not humble himself but follows his sister's emotional outburst with a denunciation of what he calls his father's "worldly ambitions and fleshly lusts." Romola refuses to listen to her brother's veiled warning against marriage with Tito because it does not conform to her notions of things and because her brother does not share in her feelings about filial duty. To her, Dino's warning is a "prevision" that "comes from the shadowing region where human souls seek wisdom apart from the human sympathies which are the very life and substance of our wisdom" (xv). Romola's love for herself does not allow her to see things from others' point of view. She can only be reached through love and her brother's love is reserved for his religion.

Romola is in many ways the forerunner of Dorothea Brooke of Middlemarch. Both heroines are inexperienced young women who marry the first scholar that proposes to them, partly because their more mature male relations fail to impart necessary knowledge to them through affection and understanding; both are self-effacing and are anxious to be apprenticed to scholars; both have a high sense of duty; both are brought up in strict isolation from the stream of life about them; both suffer because they constantly project their thoughts into others.

Dino, however, functions as a sort of negative background which anticipates the role of Tito. He is not responsible for the choices that Romola makes. Bernardo del Nero, her godfather, warns against her easy credulity:

> "Thy father has thought of shutting woman's folly out of thee by cramming thee with Greek and Latin; but thou hast been as ready to believe in the first pair of bright eyes and the first soft words that have come within reach of thee, as if thou couldst say nothing by heart but Paternosters, like other Christian men's daughters." (xix)

But Romola replies by presenting an image of Tito which originates in her fancy. "I love Tito too because he is so good. I see it, I feel it, in everything he says and does." Logic, unarmed by experience, cannot dislodge this feeling. Romola's upbringing flatters her egoism, and hence ironically prepares her to receive Tito. Before she meets with Tito, she tells her father, "I will become as learned as Cassandra Fedele: I will try and be as useful to you as if I had been a boy, and then perhaps some great scholar will want to marry me, and will not mind about a dowry; and he will like to come and live with you, and he will be to you in place of my brother. . . and you will not be sorry that I was a daughter" (v). In her attempt to unify affection and duty, she forgets, as all George Eliot's egoists do, that others too have claims which may not coincide with her good motives. The emotional and intellectual distance that separates her from the narrator is emphasized in the commentary which follows her speech: "This woman, who imposed a certain awe on those who approached her, was in a state of girlish simplicity and ignorance concerning the world outside her father's books." But Romola's speech shows that she is mentally prepared for Tito, and one is not surprised when she tells her suitor, after only a meagre acquaintance, that she has "dreamed of happiness" since he came. "I am very thirsty for a deep draught of joy--for a life all bright like you" (xvii). Elsewhere Tito's bright face "seemed like a wreath of spring, dropped suddenly in Romola's young but wintry life," and it kindles for her the "torch of some joy" hitherto unknown to her.

Tito's courtship, which is like "that of a fleet, soft-coated, dark-eyed animal that delights you by not bounding away in indifference from you, and unexpectedly pillows its chin on your palm and looks up at you desiring to be stroked --as if it loved you" (vi), is particularly soothing to Romola's affectionate nature. The kitten imagery makes concrete for the reader the nature of Tito's love. Romola is later to discover that Tito's love, like the kitten's, is instinctive and selfish; it is faithless and available to whomever would caress him better--whether Tessa or Romola.

Elsewhere, this thesis has stressed the point that a character's action is entirely dependent on the way he thinks. Romola who is anxious to unite her affection and duty in the service of her father sees Tito as meeting her preconceived ideas of an ideal husband. He is as affectionate as he is intelligent, she thinks, and totally shares her views on marriage. He will no doubt assist her father in the writing of a book and in the preservation of a library which will bring fame to the Bardos. She marries Tito because he fits into her microcosm. But marriage is to be her training ground. Soon after marriage Tito begins to neglect his promises to assist Bardo in the writing. Still under the domination of her Idione, she cannot understand why her husband fails to fulfil his duties. However, there are moments of consciousness, moments when it occurs to her that her husband may have other interests. Even at such moments, the interpretations she gives to Tito's actions originate in her own nature: "Tito was really kinder than she was," she reflects, "better tempered, less proud and resentful; he had no angry retorts, he met all complaints with perfect sweetness; he only escaped as quietly as he could from things unpleasant" (xxvii). This contemplation of Tito's positive qualities is doubly ironic. Romola does not know, in fact, that these kittenish qualities tend to make Tito amoral. She is to learn later, at the close of the novel, that avoiding unpleasant things is the basis of immorality. Secondly, the goodness which she attributes to Tito's conduct is a reflection of her own mind. Like Dorothea Brooke's, her mind, when "not under the immediate power of some strong unquestioning emotion," is apt "to suspect itself, and doubt the truth of its own horizon." The capacity for objective reflection is neccessary, in George Eliot, for a transition from Idione to Hieria. Romola's objective introspections often contrast with Tito's self-indulgent thoughts. "Do I not owe something to myself?" Tito says to himself when considering his adoptive father's claims on him. "Am I to spend my life in a wandering search? I believe he is dead" (ix). Romola's growing capacity for self analysis is a promise that she can ultimately fuse with her Hieria; Tito can never escape from his Idione.

The turning point in the affairs of Romola comes with Tito's selling of her father's library. The library has come to be a symbol of her microcosm. David Carroll significantly says that the "confused objects of Bardo's library" are the "fragments of the past" and hence symbols of "the false approach to life" taught Romola by her father.[9] Bardo's collection is a central motif in the novel, not because of its intrinsic value, but because of its emotional, and hence human values. It is a link between Romola and Florence. In order to preserve her father's collection, Romola suddenly develops interest in public affairs. Her interest in Florence is thus selfish. "The fulfilment of her father's lifelong ambition about this library," the reader is told, "was a sacramental obligation for Romola" (xxvii). This "obligation", "kindled solely by the sense of love and duty to her father's memory" leads to a "new personal interest of hers in public affairs;" since the library is to be possessed by the state, she is obliged to become interested in public affairs. And the newly acquired interest brings Romola, who "had had contact with no mind that could stir the larger possibilities of her nature", into a vital and an organic relationship with Savonarola whose sermon on martyrdom makes her feel "penetrated with a new sensation--a strange sympathy with something apart from all the definable interests of her life" (xxvii). This is the beginning of a movement which is to culminate in her regeneration and subsequent identification with her Hieria. Technically, the library is therefore central to the psychological conception of the novel.

Meanwhile, the library remains the centre of Romola's microcosm, and a symbol of her egoism. But Tito, for purely selfish reasons, sells the library which he, in fact, has promised to preserve. The scene in which Romola first learns of the sale of her father's precious acquisitions dramatizes the emotional and intellectual distances that separate her from her husband. When Tito tells her that he has, in fact, sold the library, her microcosm collapses. "You are a treacherous man!" she says "with something grating in her voice, as she looked down on him" (xxxi). For her it is a moment of revelation, in which she comes to a sudden consciousness of the true nature of her husband. The revelation is followed by a pause, which allows her time to think of the past.. "Have you robbed somebody else, who is not dead?" she continues rather passionately, "Is that the reason you wear armour?"

Romola's egoism and altruism may be defined by the way she relates to her father's library. She is altruistic when the thought of the collection leads her to contemplate the affairs of others, but selfish when it isolates her from society. After this quarrel with Tito, she withdraws into herself, "and going to her father's chair where his picture was propped, fell on her knees before it, and burst into sobs." This action, which is tantamount to worshipping her affections, increases her sense of alienation from the world that surrounds her, and hence prepares her for the terrible disenchantment which follows the removal of the library.

In order to bring to the reader a vicarious experience of Romola's total isolation, the author makes the carting away of Bardo's library coincide with the departure of the French army from Florence. While the Florentines celebrate the exodus of foreign troops from their soil, Romola mourns the departure of the last relics of her father. Standing alone on the loggia to watch the removal of the last batch of her father's treasured collections, Romola feels a wound which transforms the scene into a funeral:

> It was a cloudy day, and nearing dusk. Arno ran dark and shivering; the hills were mournful; and Florence with its girdling stone towers had that silent, tomblike look, which unbroken shadow gives to a city seen from above. Santa Croce, where her father lay, was dark amidst that darkness, and slowly crawling over the bridge, and slowly vanishing up the narrow street, was the white load, like a cruel, deliberate Fate carrying away her father's lifelong hope to bury it in an unmarked grave. Romola felt less that she was seeing this herself than that her father was conscious of it as he lay helpless under the imprisoning stones, where her hand could not reach his to tell him that he was not alone. (xxxvi)

As she stands disenchanted after the departure of the load, "heedless of the cold, and soothed by the gloom which seemed to cover her like a mourning garment and shut out the discord of joy," the peal of the bell which fills all Florence with joy at the exodus of foreign troops falls on her like "sharp wounds" that announce the "triumph of demons at the success of her husband's treachery, and the desolation of her life." This contrast of her private sorrow with public joy is the first hint in the novel of a conflict which is to become prominent later. She cannot share in the general public joy because her interest in the public is conditional and selfish.

The funeral odour associated with Romola's disenchantment is reminiscent of her wedding eve, when standing on the same loggia, she seeks a reconciliation between the "clashing deities" of a "mad joy" and of "wailing" (xvii). But finding no reconciliation, she selfishly chooses the madness of joy in the form of Tito, "the sun-god who knew nothing of night!" But now, when disenchanted, she has lost "belief in the happiness she had once thirsted for: it was a hateful, smiling, soft-handed thing, with a narrow, selfish heart" (xxxvi).

Commenting on the effect of the removal of the library on Romola, the narrator says that a "little more than three weeks ago. . . she had been intoxicated with the sound of those very bells" which now repel her, forcing her to stand "aloof" from the common life of the city. Romola's egoism, like Maggie Tulliver's, is compounded of elements of self, duty, and affection. It can be regenerated by a gradual transfer of her affection from self to humanity at large. This must be understood in order to appreciate the symbolic significance of Bardo's library and its psychological impact on Romola.[10] As I have mentioned before, the library is not only a symbol of the heroine's selfishness, but is also her vital link with the outside world. Of course, now that it is sold, it will serve to diffuse knowledge to even a larger portion of humanity, but in the meantime its loss is a drawback in Romola's progress towards social and moral integration with Florence.

The loss of the library is to Romola what the loss of family affection is to Maggie Tulliver. It creates a vacuum which is to be filled by a mentor. It is significant to observe that Romola is on a quest for values that would fill her vacuum when she encounters Fra Girolamo: "she had invented a lot for herself--to go to the most learned woman in the world, Cassandra Fedele, at Venice, and ask her how an instructed woman could support herself in a lonely life there" (xxxvi). This quest for a knowledge to live by is a recognition of self-insufficiency, and hence a movement away from her ego. Furthermore, it is an unconscious preparation for her subsequent meeting with Savonarola. The frate diagnoses her disease as egoism:

> "You are seeking your own will, my daughter. You are seeking some good other than the law you are bound to obey. But how will you find good? It is not a thing of choice: it is a river that flows from the foot of the Invisible Throne, and flows by the path of obedience. I say again, man cannot choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth; and what will you find, my daugher? Sorrow without duty--bitter herbs, and no bread with them." (xl)

Fra Girolamo is able to reach the mind of Romola because he himself is also an egoist who is trying to conquer his own self-will. It is for this reason that he addresses her with a familiarity which is reminiscent of Thomas à Kempis' address to Maggie Tulliver. His speech is not a prophecy but a dialogue with his alter ego. The river imagery, which recalls that of the "Proem", stresses George Eliot's historical concept of moral goodness, which cannot become a matter of choice for the individual. But the moral life is possible and infinitely more meaningful where one has roots and obligations. If Romola leaves Florence, she would, like her husband, have no law but her own impulses, and her life would be without sacredness, because every bond of one's "life is a debt" and "the right lies in the payment of that debt" and "can lie nowhere else." Against the inherent selfishness of Romola's life, Savonarola opposes the life of Christ not as God, but as the altruistic image of "the Supreme Offering" which makes the worshipper feel "the glow of a common life with the lost multitude for whom that offering was made." He presents the history of the world as "the history of a great redemption in which [Christ] is himself a fellow-worker, in his own place and among his own people!" This image of Christ impresses George Eliot because it agrees with her historical view of the use of divine revelations. The "gains from past revelations and discipline," she writes to Dr Payne, "we must strive to keep hold of as something more sure than shifting theory."[11] Romola would gain nothing from her suffering, from her classical studies, and from the examples of Christ and of great prophets, if she runs away from her obligations in Florence.

Romola submits to the frate and his Church, not because she thinks highly of religious dogma and her mentor's prophetic utterances but because "in this way she had found an immediate satisfaction for moral needs which all the previous culture and experience of her life left hungering" (xliv). She returns to Tito for the privilege of serving Florence:

> All that ardour of her nature which could no longer spend itself in the woman's tenderness for the father and husband, had transformed itself into an enthusiasm of sympathy with the general life. She had ceased to think that her own lot could be happy--had ceased to think of happiness at all: the one end of her life seemed to her to be the diminishing of sorrow.

As the reader must have observed from Maggie's example, self-denial that vehemently shuns happiness is compounded of elements of pride--the usual offspring of the Idione which the character is purporting to abandon. Romola has selfishly exchanged affection for duty. But she cannot stifle her affectionate nature, in spite of her new ascetic creed. She affectionately accepts the homage of humanity when she unveils herself before an adoring crowd to announce the good tidings of the coming of corn:

> They all sat up to listen, while the children trotted or crawled towards her, and pulled her black skirts, as if they were impatient at being all that long way off her face. She yielded to them, weary as she was, and sat

> down on the straw, while the little pale things peeped into her basket and pulled her hair down, and the feeble voices around her said, "The Holy Virgin be praised!" "It was the procession!" "The Mother of God has had pity on us!"
>
> At last Romola rose from the heap of straw, too tired to try and smile any longer, saying as she turned up the stone steps--"I will come by-and-by, to bring you your dinner."
>
> "Bless you, madonna! bless you!" said the faint chorus, in much the same tone as that in which they had a few minutes before praised and thanked the unseen Madonna.

This scene dramatizes religion as the ideal of human goodness,[12] and shows Romola as capable of sharing in a joy that is rooted in something other than her private concerns. Commenting on the use of scenic contrast in the chapters headed "The Unseen Madonna" and "The Visible Madonna", Barbara Hardy very appropriately notes that "the contrast establishes the humane interpretation of Romola's discipleship". She further argues that the chapters are not antithetic, but reinforce each other. "If the Invisible Madonna gives miraculous help, there is the need for human fellowship too." She sees the contrast as part of a chain of similar contrasts: the contrast of Romola and her brother Dino; of Romola--rejecting dogma and party in the name of human love--and Savonarola.[13] Barbara Hardy's perceptive commentary is supported by the narrator's contention that Romola "who had no innate taste for tending the sick and clothing the ragged, like some women to whom the details of such work are welcome in themselves, simply as an occupation, cared a great deal" for the homage paid her. By distributing corn to the poor and helpless, Romola is playing the role which Florentines assign to gods, and by accepting the homage due to the gods, she is claiming moral responsibility for man.[14] More significantly, the acclamation of the public purges Romola's affection of its egoistic encrustations and raises it above the "sickening superstition" of Savonarola's followers. Her public experience plays a major role in her transformation.

But Romola's regeneration is not yet complete. Her public duty is merely an attempt to hide her private sorrows. She has not yet forgiven her husband. She has returned to Florence in the hope of fulfilling the laws of her marriage, as required by the public. But now she finds that Tito has been unfaithful to that law in his adulterous relationship with Tessa. Simultaneous with this discovery is the confirmation of her suspicions that her husband has in fact betrayed his adoptive father as he betrayed his father-in-law. This double discovery brings Romola to a moral crisis, which threatens to obliterate the gains she has made through public service:

> Between the demands of an outward law, which she recognized as a widely-ramifying obligation, and the demands of inner moral facts which were becoming more and more peremptory . . . She felt that the sanctity attached to all close relations, and, therefore, preeminently to the closest, was but the expression in outward law of that result towards which all human goodness and nobleness must spontaneously tend; that

> the light abandonment of ties, whether inherited or voluntary, because they had ceased to be pleasant, was the uprooting of social and personal virtue. What else had Tito's crime towards Baldassarre been but that abandonment working itself out to the most hideous extreme of falsity and ingratitude? And the inspiring consciousness breathed into her by Savonarola's influence that her lot was vitally united with the general lot had exalted even the minor details of obligation into religion. . . All her efforts at union had only made its impossibility more palpable, and the relation had become for her simply a degrading servitude. The law was sacred. Yes, but rebellion might be sacred too. (Lvi)

I have quoted at length to show the magnitude of the division between Romola's private and public selves. While in her relations with the public she approaches her Hieria, through the purging of private emotions, her Idione is kept alive by what she thinks of Tito. For her to emancipate herself from her microcosm, her private and public lives must be merged. This does not mean that she ought to sacrifice what is good in her for Tito. The truth is that she is still expecting something in return for her services. To reach her Hieria she must give up all expectations for herself. The subsequent scene in which she unsympathetically confronts Tito with his moral lapses shows very much the train of her own thoughts:

> I know everything. I know who that old man was: he was your father, to whom you owe everything--to whom you owe more than if you had been his own child. By the side of that, it is a small thing that you broke my trust and my father's. As long as you deny the truth about that old man, there is a horror rising between us: the law that should make

> us one can never be obeyed. I too am a human being. I have a soul of my own that abhors your actions. Our union is a pretence--as if a perpetual lie could be a sacred marriage. (lviii)

But Tito, in his own selfish way, tells her what she has not known of herself: "I believe you have no other grievance against me--except that I have failed in fulfilling some lofty indefinite conditions on which you gave me your wifely affection, so that, by withdrawing it, you have gradually reduced me to the careful supply of your wants as a fair Piagnone of high condition and liberal charities." For Romola it is a moment of self-revelation. She writhes under the moral implications of Tito's words, and readily acknowledges that she has been selfish: "'Why do I speak of anything?' cried Romola, in anguish, sinking on her chair again. 'It is hateful in me to be thinking of myself.'" This ability of Romola's to analyze the moral implications of her conduct is what makes her so superior to Tito who is palpably incapable of an objective self-analysis.

In George Eliot, true moral regeneration requires a moral faculty which is independent of attachment to persons or things. Romola's regeneration is still very much dependent on Savonarola's "moral force" which has been "the only authority to which she had bowed" (lv). Since her morality depends on what she believes the frate to be, she is not liberated from her ego, which she really worships in Savonarola. Consequently, she is disillusioned when the frate, for what he calls national interests, denies the right of appeal to her godfather, who is accused of high treason. "Say rather, you hold it good for Florence that there shall be more blood and more hatred," she argues with great vehemence. "Will the death of five Medicians put an end to parties in Florence? Will the death of a noble old man like Bernardo Del Nero save a city that holds such men as Dolfo Spini?" (lix) She contemptuously rejects Savonarola's claim that "the cause of freedom" and that "of God's kingdom upon earth" will be simultaneously served by denying the Mediceans a legitimate right of appeal: "Do you, then, know so well what will further the coming of God's kingdom, father, that you will dare to despise the plea of mercy--of justice--of faithfulness to your teaching?" she asks impetuously. When the frate selfishly claims that "the cause of my party is the cause of God's kingdom," Romola's faith is at an end: "'I do not believe it!' said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. 'God's kingdom is something wider--else, let me stand outside it with the beings that I love.'"[15] In this scene, Romola's microcosm is in conflict with Savonarola's. Both egoists are lashed to fury.

By refusing to intervene on behalf of her godfather, the frate has fallen short of Romola's expectations. In the logic of Romola's mind, the right of the individual is synonymous with that of the state. Looking at Romola from this point of view, one can see that her egoism has a large element of altruism in it. Her affection for her relations is quickly extended to the public, as her sympathies for Baldassarre and the poor of Florence demonstrate. But the extension of her affection, as I have stressed before, is dependent on the moral qualities that she attributes to Savonarola. What, therefore, she loses by this disenchantment with her moral mentor is not only a sense of duty but a sense of her affections. Consequently, she becomes alienated from Florence as well as from her Hieria. "With the sinking of high human trust," says the narrator, "the dignity of life sinks too. We cease to believe in our own better self, since that also is part of the common nature which is degraded in our thought; and all the finer impulses of the soul are dulled. Romola felt even the springs of her once active pity drying up, and leaving her to barren egoistic complaining" (lxi).

The transforming effect of this experience is so great that Romola, whose hopes for the possibilities of life are so robust, is forced to contemplate suicide. She drifts to the Mediterranean coast where she wishes to "lie down to sleep and pass from sleep into death" on the "clear waves" of the sea. Like Maggie Tulliver, she wishes "to be freed from the burden of choice, when all motive was bruised," by committing herself to the mercy of the ebb and flow of the sea. Such a moral lapse is the utmost act of selfishness in George Eliot. It proves the total inadequacy of the assumptions of Romola's microcosm.

Fortunately, however, the river, instead of becoming her graveyard, becomes the cradle of a regenerate, new life. She finds herself in a plague-ridden village where she has to labour assiduously to bring water to the thirsty and to resuscitate the dying. Her new duties recreate for her the memory of a famine-stricken Florence that, in gratitude, had deified her. In the new village, her deification is reenacted by grateful villagers who acclaim her as the "Blessed Lady." These revived memories together with renewed physical contact with suffering humanity resurrect the affections which she has lost as well as instill in her a novel sense of duty that is independent of all arguments about the rights of the individual or of the state: "If everything else is doubtful, this suffering that I can help is certain; if the glory of the cross is an illusion, the sorrow is only the truer" (lxix). The new experience emancipates her moral faculty, and her concept of duty is no longer dependent on the morality of the frate. "While the strength is in my arm," she avows, "I will stretch it out to the fainting; while the light visits my eyes they shall seek the forsaken." With this resolution, comes recognition of the nature of her egoism, as she begins to condemn her flight which she attributes to "cowardly self-care; the grounds on which Savonarola had once taken her back were truer, deeper than the grounds she had had for her second flight." But the old self reasserts itself. "In strictness there is no replacing of relations," she reflects. "The presence of the new does not nullify the failure and breach of the old. Life has lost its perfection; it has been maimed." Finally, however, she is able to isolate her Idione from the humane part of Savonarola's teaching; she evolves a moral principle that is at unity with her Hieria:

> Her indignant grief for her godfather had no longer complete possession of her, and her sense of debt to Savonarola was recovering predominance. Nothing that had come, or was to come, could do away with the fact that there had been a great inspiration in him which had waked a new life in her. (lxix)

With a new knowledge which transcends the shortcomings of her mentor, she returns to Florence to carry out, in a quiet unobtrusive way the job of the frate and to care for Tito's mistress and her children. In the "Epilogue", she sums up her experience in her advice to Tito's son Lillo: "there are so many things wrong and difficult in the world, that no man can be great--he can hardly keep himself from wickedness--unless he gives up thinking much about pleasure and rewards and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful." In this advice, she sums up the conflicts of Tito, of Savonarola, and of herself. Her view of life may be tragic, but it is also a recognition of a moral pattern in human affairs and, of course, in those of Romola. She has finally emancipated herself from her microcosm.

Tito Melema

If Romola's microcosm is dependent on a system of affectionate relationships, Tito's is organized on a hedonistic calculus that requires a succession of treacheries to meet its needs. Tito is not evil by nature; his first moral failure is a blurring of his mind and sensibility by an exclusive attempt to "arrange life to his mind," regardless of the claims of his outer world. His mental habit is demonstrated in the following monologue in which he equivocates about his duty to his step-father and to society:

> But, after all, why was he bound to go? What, looked at closely, was the end of all life, but to extract the utmost sum of pleasure? And was not his own blooming life a promise of incomparably more pleasure, not for himself only, but for others, than the withered wintry life of a man who was past the time of keen enjoyment, and whose ideas had stiffened into barren rigidity? . . . But what was the sentiment of society--a mere tangle of anomalous traditions and opinions, which no wise man would take as a guide, except so far as his own comfort was concerned. (xi)

Tito's pseudo-epicureanism leads to a succession of deceits, as he routinely betrays Baldassarre, Bardo, Romola, Tessa, Savonarola, and finally Florence. Tito's microcosm is the one in which one does what is soothing to one's ego and avoids things that are unpleasant. It is more pleasant to betray his adoptive father than to rescue him from slavery; it is easier to sell Bardo's library than to maintain it; it is more profitable to betray Florence than to live in poverty.

His actions, in the novel, are controlled by his firm belief in his ability to use people and even manipulate nemesis to his own advantage. The first instance of this is his effort to manipulate public opinion after he lies to Bardo about his adoptive father. Haunted by the fear that Fra Luca knows the true story of his father, he goes in quest of the monk in order to explain things to him. His conscience, like Arthur Donnithorne's, is scorched by a care "for the pleasures that could only come to him through the good opinion of his fellow-men" (xvi). Ironically, as he enters the cloister of San Marco, in quest of Fra Luca, whose good opinion he is anxious to enlist in order to succeed with Romola, he feels "himself too cultured and skeptical" to be influenced by the fear of nemesis.[16] His care for the opinion of others is an attempt to gain selfish ends by pretending to be moral. But since the purpose of his journey is also to prevent the spread of any information which may stop Romola from having a bad opinion of him, Romola can be said to exert moral influence on him. Those who find Romola dull often ignore the active moral force she exercises.[17]

Tito, in spite of his pleasure-loving nature, does, in fact, experience a moment of disenchantment while he awaits Romola's return from a momentous interview with Dino, an interview which he fears may expose his treachery. He awaits the return, we are told, "with a sickening sense of the sunlight that slanted before him and mingled itself with the ruin of his hopes" (xvii). David Carroll calls this experience "an obtuse moment of disenchantment," because Tito's "moral tradition" which has 'no memories of self conquest'(xxxix) is a result of his successive escapes from imminent disenchantments."[18] But Tito's disenchantment is nonetheless true. His frustration is a result of a moral perplexity which stems from the fear of nemesis. As soon as the fear is removed he celebrates the victory of his Idione over morality:

> He was in paradise: disgrace, shame, parting --there was no fear of them any longer. This happiness was too strong to be marred by the sense that Romola was deceived in him; nay, he could only rejoice in her delusion; for, after all, concealment had been wisdom. The only thing he could regret was his needless dread; if, indeed, the dread had not been worth suffering for the sake of this sudden rapture.(xvii)

For Tito, to reflect is to revel in the spoils of others. But the "suffering for his rapture" is in any case real; though it leads to no moral vision, it is still a recognition of a law beyond that of his microcosm.

Tito's microcosm is a world from which the pain of responsibility is excluded. He tells Romola that

> "I wish we lived in Southern Italy, where thought is broken, not by weariness, but by delicious languors such as never seem to come over the 'ingenia acerrima Florentina.' I should like to see you under the southern sun, lying among the flowers, subdued into mere enjoyment, while I bent over you and touched

> the lute and sang to you some little unconscious strain that seemed all one with the light and the warmth." (xvii)

Tito, the sensuous egoist, is longing for a place that is far removed from civilization, where he can freely revel in sensuousness, without being obligated to the moral law. It is this desire that leads him to both Tessa and Romola. He finds a temporary fulfilment of his wishes in Tessa. The scene in which he and Tessa feast themselves under a plane-tree that lies "outside the gates" of civilization reminds the reader of Bacchus and Ariadne enjoying themselves in a Grecian wood. We are told that "the feast was spread out on Tessa's lap, she leaning with her back against the trunk of the tree, and he stretched opposite to her, resting his elbows on the rough green growth cherished by the shade, while the sunlight stole through the boughs and played about them like a winged thing" (x). Tessa is his alter ego, and a fulfillment of his yearning for a paradise that has no law but that of pleasure.

But he commits a tragic error when he tries to incorporate Romola into his microcosm. He chooses as a betrothal present a representation of "the triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne" (xviii), designed to "hide away" from Romola "for ever that remembrancer of sadness" whose "images" he wishes to "bury in a tomb of joy" (xx). However, this symbolic attempt to obliterate Romola's world of moral responsibilities is doomed to failure from the start.

Tito's Ariadne is, in fact, modelled after Antigone. When he disposes of Bardo's library in order to finance his flight to a Lethean paradise, Romola reacts like Antigone, and not like Ariadne: "Romola looked at the familiar images with new bitterness and repulsion: they seemed a more pitiable mockery than ever on this chill morning, when she had waked up to wander in loneliness. They had been no tomb of sorrow, but a lying screen" (xxxvii). With these thoughts, she rescues Dino's cross from its prison in her husband's tabernacle of pleasure. This symbolic act of emancipating sorrow is also an act of separation which is a significant turning point in the affairs of Tito, and of _Romola_.

Tito's conscious effort to bury Dino's cross--a present made to Romola in remembrance of her brother's suffering and death--may also be viewed as a symbolic attempt to evade nemesis. Ironically, however, there is implied in his action an unconscious recognition of a way of life that is necessarily opposed to the one he chooses--a way of life which the presence of Baldassarre in Florence insists that he must recognize and accept.

With the entry of Baldassarre into Florence, the fear of nemesis threatens Tito's pleasure-oriented microcosm with total annihilation. It is symbolically relevant that Baldassarre is brought into the city by a foreign army whose mission is the suppression of the freedom of Florence, a freedom that is essential for the survival of Tito's egoistic paradise. From this point of view, Melema's private life is intertwined with the public affairs of Florence, and hence his treacheries are bound to redound on him. Meanwhile, he encounters his adoptive father at the height of his pleasures, when the battered image of his prisoner-father, like an image of sorrow, presents a most striking contrast with his luxurious form, effulgent with the joys that radiate from successes in life. In the midst of his joys Baldassarre's arm, like a claw from a distant past, suddenly clutches him on the shoulder:

> It was Tito Melema who felt that clutch. He turned his head, and saw the face of his adoptive father, Baldassarre Calvo, close to his own.
>
> The two men looked at each other, silent as death; Baldassarre, with dark fierceness and a tightening grip of the soiled worn hands on the velvet-clad arm; Tito, with cheeks and lips all bloodless, fascinated by terror. It seemed a long while to them--it was but a moment.
>
> The first sound Tito heard was the short laugh of Piero Di Cosimo, who stood close by him and was the only person that could see his face. "Ha, ha! I know what a ghost should be now."
>
> "This is another escaped prisoner," said Lorenzo Tornabuoni, "Who is he, I wonder?"
>
> "Some madman, surely," said Tito. (xxii)

This crucial meeting with his adoptive father ought to have shown him that he can never successfully isolate himself in his narrow microcosm, that he cannot evade his moral duties. But he reacts in his usual selfish way. He needs a change in the method of his thinking before he can come to moral consciousness.

His apparently impulsive reaction to Baldassarre's presence is indicative of his total moral economy; it carries "an inspiration of crime, that in one instant does the work of long premeditation." His impassioned utterance is a logical sequence to his earlier triumph over nemesis.[19] It is a wishful longing for a formula that would obliterate his past because it is not pleasant. But like the cross which would not be buried in a tabernacle of joy, the past simply refuses to be wished away. Piero di Cosimo sees Tito transformed into a ghost by Baldassarre's clutch. The narrator corroborates Piero's observation by noting that "it seemed to Tito, when he had spoken, that some magical poison had darted from Baldassarre's eyes, and that he felt it rushing through his vein." Tito leaves this scene a totally changed being, "as if he had been smitten with a blighting disease that had suddenly turned the joyous sense of young life into pain" (xxiii).

Tito's pain is all the more horrible because he cannot escape from his ego. He is incapable of that objective analysis of himself that would, through confession, lead to "the repentance which cuts off all moorings to evil," and which "demands something more than selfish fear. He had no sense that there was strength and safety in truth". His reflection is concerned more with the effect of nemesis than its cause: "Baldassarre," he reflects, "living, and in Florence, was a living revenge, which would no more rest than a winding serpent would rest until it had crushed its prey. It was not in the nature of that man to let an injury pass unavenged; his love and his hatred were of that passionate fervour which subjugates all the rest of the being, and makes a man sacrifice himself to his passion as if it were a deity to be worshipped with self-destruction" (xxiii). When his mind turns on himself, it does not consider the moral import of his actions, but looks for an easier way to cheat justice: "If he had not uttered those decisive words . . . would not the risk have been less?" In a character capable of moral regeneration, reflection leads to thought about others. Tito's habit of avoiding the unpleasant, makes him incapable of objective thinking. Thus reflection instead of leading him as it does Romola, out of his egoism, returns him to the most repugnant aspect of his Idione, and hence plants in him seeds of new crimes.

Later, at a supper in the Rucellai Gardens, he is again confronted with Baldassarre, but instead of availing himself of this second opportunity to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, he commits a crime which makes regicide look like a child's play. "I believe this man is mad," he says murderously. "I did not recognize him the first time he encountered me in Florence, but I know now that he is the servant who years ago accompanied me and my adoptive father to Greece, and was dismissed on account of misdemeanours. His name is Jacopo di Nola" (xxxix).

Tito's reaction to his circumstances proves the major tenet of my thesis that a character's fortunes are largely dependent on the world image that is evolved in his mind. Tito's world remains the one in which unpleasant things can be avoided through the agency of deceit. Instead of making an open confession to liberate himself from his microcosm, he buys a chain-armour to protect his skin from his enemy's sword. But ironically the armour brings emotional rupture between him and his wife. Romola points out that his sensitive skin "has changed into a hard shell," and Tito, on his own part, is repulsed by a wife "from whose mind he was in danger" (xxvii).

Finding himself at the end of his wits, Tito has no other alternative, than to feign repentance, but, "it was not repentance with a white sheet round it and taper in hand, confessing its hated sin in the eyes of men, that Tito was preparing for: it was a repentance that would make all things pleasant again, and keep all past unpleasant things secret" (xxxiv). Open confession, in George Eliot as in Dostoyevsky, leads a character from the complexity of lying to simplicity and truth, and hence its remedial influence. Tito's repentance does not involve open confession. It is a selfish attempt "to have his world once again completely cushioned with goodwill." He cannot come to true repentance as long as he continues to exclude the facts of human suffering from his microcosm. His interview with his father is another attempt to bury sorrow. But Baldassarre, like the cross, does not want to be buried: "I saved you--I nurtured you--I loved you," he cries in agony. "You forsook me--you robbed me--you denied me. What can you give me? You have made the world bitterness to me; but there is one draught of sweetness left--that you shall know agony" (xxxiv).[20] Baldassarre's punctuated speech, which comes from the very depth of that other world which Tito is constantly struggling to avoid, summarizes the impact of Tito's egoistic microcosm, not only on the world on the speaker, but also on those of Romola, Savonarola, and Florence. But it is not in the sanguine nature of Tito to penetrate the sorrows of others.

In order to escape from a Florence that has become too hot, Tito successively betrays the Medicean, the Frate's, and the Spini's parties. His reflection after he helps to expose the Peiro di Cosimo conspiracy reveals a mind that is absolutely self-centered and insensitive to the world outside itself:

> Was he to relinquish all the agreeable fruits of life because their party had failed? His proffer of a little additional proof against them would probably have no influence on their fate,. . . but if he had not given it, his own fortunes, which made a promising fabric, would have been utterly ruined. And what motive could any man really have, except his own interest? . . . no man of clear intellect allowed his

> course to be determined by . . . puerile impulses or questionable inward fumes. Did not Pontanus, poet and philosopher of unrivalled Latinity, make the finest possible oration at Naples to welcome the French king, who had come to dethrone the learned orator's royal friend and patron? and still Pontanus held up his head and prospered. Men did not really care about these things, except when their personal spleen was touched. (lvii)

Tito is trying hard to avoid moral issues, but he cannot escape from nemesis any more than he can escape from himself. "His conduct to his father had been hidden by successful lying," says the narrator, but "his present act did not admit of total concealment--in its very nature it was a revelation. And Tito winced under his new liability to disesteem." However, flushed with his success over the Mediceans, he goes on to betray Savonarola whose existence he regards as conveniently "furnishing him with that round of the ladder from which he was about to leap on to a new and smooth footing very much to his heart's content. And everything now was in forward preparation for that leap" (lxv).

He succeeds in betraying Florence, but fails to elude nemesis. At last, pursued by a crowd, like masked furies, he flings away his "belt and scarsella," shouting to his pursuers, "There are diamonds! there is gold!" (lxvii) He realizes, when it is too late, that even gold cannot sustain his microcosm. He who for "gem" sold his fellow-beings wishes now to buy his own life with gold. His success is however temporary; he may deceive his pursuers, who can be bought with gold, but Baldssarre cannot be bribed. At the final confrontation with his adoptive father, Tito is forced to recognize the claims of another world: "Ah, Yes! You see me--you know me!" Tito knew him; but he did not know whether it was life or death that had brought him into the presence of his injured father" (lxvii). To Tito death remains a "chill gloom with the face of the hideous past hanging over him for ever." He does not undergo moral growth. The narrator's remark about his death is a fitting commentary on his life:

> Who shall put his finger on the work of justice, and say, "It is there?" Justice is like the Kingdom of God--it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning. (lxvii)

But this "yearning" never becomes kinetic in Tito. The total failure of his vision of a world in which sorrow is separated from joy is symbolized by his dead body clinging to Baldassarre's. This unity in death is, of course, futile, but it throws into relief the more meaningful unity which a living Romola achieves with the spirit of Savonarola.

Savonarola

Like Romola, Savonarola is possessed of a strong will, which often induces in him a desire to project himself into others. His lifelong quest has been to subjugate his will to God's. At the age of seventeen, "the contradiction between men's lives and their professed beliefs had pressed upon him with a force that had been enough to destroy his appetite for the world, and at the age of twenty-three had driven him into the cloister" (xxi). This is his first attempt at the suppression of his "ardent, power-loving soul" which believes "in great ends" and longs to achieve them "by the exertion of its strong will" (xxi). When, however, he tells Romola that "the cause of my party is the cause of God's Kingdom," he is identifying his will with God's, Such identification is an act of selfishness --an attempt to make his microcosm supreme. Romola is drawn to him because she identifies her own moral will with his. The exercise of the frate's "will" is therefore of primary importance in the novel. When the will of the great teacher coincides with Romola's, there is harmony; when the wills clash the moral pattern of the novel is confused, as is shown in the conflict between private and public affections.

Savonarola's tragic flaw arises from an unconscious manipulation of his will to serve ends that are both selfish and altruistic. George Eliot defines tragedy as the difficulty of adjusting "our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot, partly as to our natural constitution, partly as sharers of life with our fellow-beings. . . . Looking at individual lots," she continues, "I seem to see in each the same story wrought out with more or less tragedy . . . a subject to be really tragic, it must represent irreparable collision between the individual and the general."[21] The frate's life is tragically divided between "a power-loving" egoistic nature and an altruistic nature that hungers after "purity and simplicity" (lix). These two natures produce in him an internal conflict which affects his relationships with the public. When under the influence of his Idione, he fancies himself as the favourite son of God who is given the sole power to mediate between God and men. But he is conscious of this aspect of his nature, and makes frequent efforts to conquer his strong will and emancipate himself from the narrow microcosm in which he is trapped by his Idione. When he tells Romola that they must "die daily by the crucifixion of our selfish will--to die at last by laying our bodies on the altar" (xI), he is correctly reflecting his own struggles to conquer his Idione in Romola.

Savonarola's relationship with the public is defined through the use he makes of prophecy. He often uses what he calls his gift of prophecy to promote the claims of his microcosm. "Savonarola," we are told, "appeared to believe and his hearers more or less waveringly believed that he had a mission like that of the Hebrew prophets, and that the Florentines amongst whom his message was delivered were in some sense a second chosen people." This belief that is so flattering to the ego has enormous potentialities for good as well as for evil. The ironic conflict that is an important element of the frate's character arises from his belief in his power of prophecy. As a prophet he is obliged to submit his will to that of his Master and God. At the same time, in order to remain a seer in the sight of a credulous audience, he has to assert his will in matters that are extrareligious. Consequently, his will indirectly regains the supremacy that it loses to God.[22] His conflict entraps him "in a tangle of egoistic demands, false ideas and outward conditions that made simplicity impossible" (lix). The "tangle of egoistic demands" in which he is trapped is reflected in his inability to denounce dangerous charlatanism practised by his followers. Romola, for instance, attributes his failure to condemn Camilla's "Divine" suggestion, that her godfather Bernardo del Nero be thrown from the window, to selfish motives which imprison his conscience:

> He was fettered inwardly by the consciousness that such revelations were not, in their basis, distinctly separable from his own visions; he was fettered outwardly by the foreseen consequence of raising a cry against himself even among members of his own party, as one who would suppress all Divine inspiration of which he himself was not the vehicle. (lii)

Savonarola's moral perplexity originates in the tragic division of his mind between his Idione and Hieria. His "nature was one of those in which opposing tendencies coexist in almost equal strength: the passionate sensibility which, impatient of definite thought, floods every idea with emotion and tends towards contemplative ecstasy, alternated in him with a keen perception of outward facts and a vigorous practical judgement of men and things"(lxiv). His emotional life is dominated by his Idione and his intellectual side by his Hieria. Through the power of his Hieria, he promulgates a law which allows citizens, accused of crime, a right of appeal. But his prophetic nature--under the influence of his Idione--denies the right to his enemies. Romola observes appropriately that "it is private hatred that would deny them the appeal" (lix). When, however, his visions are informed by his intelligence, they become powerful moral agents, as his denunciation of corruption and insights about the coming of the French show. But the interplay of his two natures makes him confuse inspiration with miracle. His Florentine audience takes him literally when he declares his belief "in a future supernatural attestation of his work." But his reflections on the "Trial by Fire", by which his fanatical enemies hope to settle his dispute with the Pope, show the confusion of his mind about miracles:

> "To appeal to heaven for a miracle by a rash acceptance of a challenge, which is a mere snare prepared for me by ignoble foes, would be a tempting of God, and the appeal would not be responded to. . . . But Fra Domenico's invincible zeal to enter into the trial may be the sign of a Divine vocation, may be a pledge that the miracle--"
>
> But no! when Savonarola brought his mind close to the threatened scene in the Piazza, and imagined a human body entering the fire, his belief recoiled again. It was not an event that his imagination could simply see: he felt it with shuddering vibrations to the

> extremities of his sensitive fingers. The miracle could not be. . . . At the very worst, if Fra Domenico were compelled to enter, he should carry the consecrated Host with him and with that Mystery in his hand, there might be a warrant for expecting that the ordinary effects of fire would be stayed; or, more probably, this demand would be resisted, and might thus be a final obstacle to the trial." (lxiv)[23]

The narrator very appropriately observes that this "dissidence between inward reality and outside seeming was not the Christian simplicity after which he had striven through years of his youth and prime, and which he had preached as a chief fruit of the Divine Life." There is too much of himself or his Idione in this struggle. At the same time, the conflict shows that he is making efforts to liberate himself from his microcosm. It is his struggles which impress Romola.

Romola is finally reconciled with him because he is humanized by his constant efforts to suppress his will, which is as militant as Romola's, and because she shares with him the urgent need to find a formula which will make life meaningful. After his martyrdom, she finds "no lingering echoes of the old vehement self-assertion" in his confession. What she finds is a "continued colloquy with that divine purity with which he sought complete reunion; it was the outpouring of self-abasement; it was one long cry for inward renovation" (lxxi). Beyond attaining moral consciousness and unity with his Hieria, Savonarola has also won a convert in Romola. The unity of the novel has to be located in this final act in which Romola identifies herself with the aspirations of her great teacher. Viola Meynell summarizes this unity admirably when she says that "Savonarola (to whom falls, in this book, that apostolate towards a woman's soul) fails with the multitude and succeeds with the individual soul, with Romola's soul: that makes a fine balance, or recompense."[24] It is not his religious and political beliefs that are of moment, but his human contacts or relationships.

Florence

The drama of Romola takes place at a time when, because of the death of its leader Lorenzo, Florence is fragmented and divided into many little worlds or microcosms. When Bardo hears of the death of the Medicean ruler, he says, "a new epoch has come for Florence--a dark one, I fear. Lorenzo has left behind him an inheritance that is but like the alchemist's laboratory when the wisdom of the alchemist is gone." The speaker is here trying to define the nature of the vacuum created by the exodus of the Magnifico. "All who want a new order of things are likely to conceive new hopes," he continues. "We shall have the old strife of parties I fear" (vi). A chemist's laboratory is dangerous unless it is supervised by a trained chemist. The death of the strong leader lets loose private interests stripped of moral vision. The clash of these interests is dramatized in the very first chapter of the novel in the scene that is appropriately located at the Mercato Vecchio or old market place. The scene represents Florentines from various social and labour groups--tailors, farmers, pedlars, notaries, barbers, and peasants--disputing rather vociferously about the significance of a mysterious bull which allegedly appears to a woman after Lorenzo's death. The "fiery" horned beast is seen "coming down on the church to crush it." Each disputant is self-satisfied and appears to value his own microcosm more than the world of Florence. The indomitable barber Nello relates this anarchy at the market place to the political future of Florence when he tells Tito that "there is but one Lorenzo, I imagine, whose death could throw the Mercato into an uproar, set the lantern of the Duomo leaping in desperation, and cause the lions of the Republic to feel under an immediate necessity to devour one another" (iii). What is underscored in the "Mercato uproar," and elsewhere in Romola, is not so much the corruption that is rife in Florence as the division into microcosms that are at war with one another.

However, the fiery horned bull has the same mission as the frate's anticipated baptism of fire. Just as the characters are morally responsible for their actions, Florence has itself to blame for its sorrows. Its tragic fragmentariness arises from the subjugation of its Hieria by its Idione. The microcosms into which it is divided are too concerned with their own interests to be conscious of a general good. The Mediceans, for instance, are intent on promoting their interests, not only at the expense of the other sects, but also at the expense of any moral consideration. "The deepest hypocrisy," they believe, is "the best service" and demands "the heaviest pay; so that to suspect an agent because he played a part strongly would have been an absurd want of logic" (lvii). Acting on this reasoning, they engage the services of the faithless Tito in the belief that his known hypocrisy will redound to their party interest. With a due sense of irony, the narrator observes that "the principle of duplicity admitted by the Mediceans on their own behalf deprived them of any standard by which they could measure the trustworthiness of a colleague who had not, like themselves, prejudices which were intensely Medicean." What is very alarming about the Medicean morality is that it rejects any feeling that transcends family interests. Niccolo Ridolf scoffs at the frate's party which he contemptuously calls "this psalm-singing party, who vote for nothing but the glory of God, and want to make believe we can all love each other" (xxxix). Niccolo's scepticism obliterates moral consciousness.

The Spini faction, on the other hand--deprived of the learned culture of the Mediceans and the Christian humility of the Frate's party--represents Florence at its moral nadir. It is a conglomeration of vulgar individuals intent on looting, killing, and burning. But even the Frate's party, with its altruistic aims is finally trapped by egoistic interests into participating in the killing of its opponents.

The author, however, uses Romola and Savonarola to show that private affection can be a cradle for a higher moral consciousness. But the Florentine factions view the moral struggles of these two strong characters from a moral distance. When Macchiavelli, for instance, blames Savonarola for not granting a right of appeal to the Mediceans, he is not concerned with the ethical import of the action, but with the values of his microcosm. "Where personal ties are strong," he argues, "the hostilities they raise must be taken due account of. Many of these half-way severities are mere hot-headed blundering. The only safe blows to be inflicted on men and parties are the blows that are too heavy to be avenged" (lx). He is more concerned with his own safety than with that of Florence. In the same vein, Romola's plea for her godfather on grounds of moral duty and affection only amuses the French envoy. "It is excusable in a woman. . . to think that her affections must overrule the good of the state," he says, "and that nobody is to be beheaded who is anybody's cousin; but such a view is not to be encouraged in the male population." The "good of the state" is, of course, a euphemism for French interests, which must take precedence of moral issues. The French army is in Florence not as a moral agent, as the frate erroneously believes, but to protect the interests of its microcosm.

But the fragmentariness of Florence sets into relief the attempts of Savonarola and Romola to unite Florence morally and socially. The frate's ethical theory fails to gain ground because Florence cannot successfully effect a transition from moral ignorance to knowledge without a mediator. But his teaching is like seeds growing secretly in the hearts of the Romolas--the mediators who will, like Dorothea Brooke of Middlemarch, spread the seeds of moral consciousness in a quiet unassuming way. In this context, John A. Huzzard's observation becomes very significant: "against a less scrupulously detailed background the later phase of Romola's career in public life would be utterly lacking in depth, poignancy, and fidelity to truth."[25] The political struggles of Florence impart meaning and significance to the moral conflicts of Savonarola and Romola. After the death of Savonarola, Florence falls into the hands of the excessively depraved, ignorant Spinis. Without the Romolas it will be cut off intellectually and emotionally from the moral universe--past and present.

Chapter VI

Felix Holt, The Radical

"It is not like a Novel and there may be a complaint of want of the ordinary Novel interest, but it is like looking on at a series of panoramas."[1] Although John Blackwood's comment was meant as a eulogy, it did anticipate a series of reviews critical of the formal unity of Felix Holt.[2] Of course, George Eliot did not think that she was writing a series of unconnected panoramas. She sees the threads of the novel as so "woven together"[3] that the separation of a single thread will destroy the intricate pattern of the whole. But she was also aware of the difficulty of making the author's design obvious to the reader. "I sicken again with despondency under the sense that the most carefully written books lie, both outside and inside people's minds, deep underneath a heap of trash," she writes to her publisher.[4] Many modern critics now see beneath this seeming "heap of trash" a valid artistic structure based on the mutal effects of human relationships.[5]

As in Romola the author dramatizes the conflict that arises when there is no harmony between private and public interests, so in Felix Holt she shows that the public self cannot be isolated from the private self, and that any attempt to segregate life in compartments can only bring disaster. Reflecting on the social antithesis of the Transomes and the Holts, the narrator says that the aim of the novel is to show "the mutual influence of dissimilar destinies" (iii).[6] The speaker is, of course, using a paradox to mock the social pretenses of the Transomes. G.S. Venables misses the point of the paradox when he complains that "Mrs Transome and her son know nothing of the world of Independent Ministers, and, if they had heard that the son of a quack-medicine vendor had voluntarily become a journeyman watchmaker, they would scarcely have appreciated so imperceptible a declension in the remoter portion of the social scale."[7] But the point is that the life of the "imperceptible" Felix does have profound effects on the fortunes of the high born Transomes. The critic is like the French herald Montjoy who is much more worried over the indiscriminate throwing together of the corpses of nobles and commons on a battle field than he is concerned with the loss of so many human lives.[8] The business of life, no less than that of death, does not recognize social barriers. George Eliot means the dissimilarity of destinies to be only apparent. Felix Holt is, in fact, structured to throw into relief the disorder that arises when members of a community live in isolated microcosms.[9] The aim of my thesis is to demonstrate that the novel is conceived from the points of view of several self-centered characters, each of them trying to subordinate the claims of society to his own.

Felix Holt[10]

Felix Holt sees himself as the centre of a millennial world in which everyone lives for everyone else, and "privilege, monopoly, and oppression" (xvi) are abolished. But the primary opposition to his ideal world is in fact himself. He tells Rev Lyon that "a phrenologist at Glasgow told me I had large veneration; another man there, who knew me, laughed out and said I was the most blasphemous iconoclast living. 'That,' says my phrenologist, 'is because of his large Ideality, which prevents him from finding anything perfect enough to be venerated'" (v). Felix is divided between the iconoclastic and venerating selves. One makes him impatient of thought and tends to isolate him in a narrow exclusive microcosm, the other draws him to others and forces him to modify his ideas through his experience with people.

It is only in Felix that George Eliot uses the services of a phrenologist. This is largely because he is the least introspective of all the major characters in the author's fictional world.[11] R.H. Hutton notes that "there is no sufficient development in the character, or doubt about its decisions, to make a really great central interest."[12] In psychologically conceived characters, the reader can watch the mind grow through the process of introspection and self analysis. But because Felix is depicted as an actor rather than as a thinker, his internal development raises an unusual problem, which is resolved through the agency of a phrenologist. His real phrenologist is Rev Lyon who functions in the novel to reconcile his iconoclasm with his idealism, and thus helps him to understand the role of a real reformer. The Malt Yard Minister is neither superfluous[13] nor Felix's analogue;[14] he is his alter ego and operates as a second self who brings a reflective quality to his mind.

Struck by the ardour of Felix's zeal, Rev Lyon decides to play the role of a mature mind to his friend; he introduces an element of doubt which is conspicuously absent from his young friend's thought. "There might be a dangerous snare in an unsanctified outstepping of average Christian practice," he warns. He foresees the major problem of his pupil's life to be self-centredness and ignorance of his true nature. Felix, however, does not, at this early stage, fully comprehend the meaning of Rev Lyon's warning. He insists that his mission differs from that of the average man, the "clerkly gentility." He is to be "another sort of demagogue" (v).

Rev Lyon has also "had [his] own head explored" by a phrenologist, with results as flattering as his young friend's. But unlike Felix, he knows that an approbatory knowledge of self often feeds the egoism of an unwary mind. "It is . . . but a vain show of fulfilling the heathen precept 'know thyself', and too often leads to a self-estimate which will subsist in the absence of that fruit by which alone the quality of the tree is made evident" (v). In George Eliot, knowing oneself is an experience that is acquired through long contact with suffering humanity. When this knowledge comes through the garbled utterances of a phrenologist it loses its humanizing or moral quality, and hence easily becomes a form of hubris.

Like Felix, Rev Lyon is also a radical, but his radicalism has been tempered by the experience that has come to him through his love for an "unregenerate Catholic" Annette. Until Felix learns to love Annette's daughter Esther he will not find the object of affection in which his iconoclastic and venerating tendencies will be united. It is significant that Rev Lyon always uses his own experience as a check to Felix's excesses:

> "I have to keep a special watch over myself in this matter, inasmuch as I have a need to utterance which makes the thought within me seem as a pent-up fire, until I have shot it forth, as it were, in arrowy words, each one hitting its mark. Therefore I pray for a listening spirit, which is a great mark of grace. Nevertheless, my young friend, I am bound, as I said, to warn you. The temptations that most beset those who have great natural gifts, and are wise after the flesh, are pride and scorn, more particularly towards those weak things of the world which have been chosen to confound the things which are mighty. The scornful nostril and the high head gather not the odours that lie on the track of truth. The mind that is too ready at contempt and reprobation is--" (v)

By establishing an empathic relationship with Felix, Rev Lyon is able to penetrate the core of his egoism and to condemn its "pride and scorn." The duty of reform can only be accomplished through humility. Felix Holt shares much of Adam Bede's impatience with the weak; and like Adam, he is to learn, through suffering, that he too is weak and needs the assistance of his frail brothers and sisters. After their first meeting Rev Lyon tells Esther that he discerns in Felix "a love for whatsoever things are honest and true" but fears "the Evil One will take advantage of [his] natural yearning towards the better, to delude the soul with a self-flattering belief in a visionary virtue, higher than ordinary fruits of the spirit" (v). He is of course hinting at his pupil's iconoclastic self, which not only drives him into excesses, but also isolates him in a narrow microcosm, in which he sees himself as the sole agent of radicalism.

The difference between the two men's approach to refrom is dramatized in their respective views on music. Felix insists that every member of a congregation ought to sing "a different tune," arguing that "it's a domineering thing to set a tune and expect everybody else to follow it. It's a denial of private judgement." But Rev Lyon shows that the freedom which his friend contemplates is nothing but anarchy:

> But the right to rebellion is the right to seek a higher rule, and not to wander in mere lawlessness. Wherefore, I beseech you, seem not to say that liberty is licence. . . . I apprehend that there is a law in music, disobedience whereunto would bring us in our singing to the level of shrieking maniacs or howling beasts; so that herein we are well instructed how true liberty can be nought but

> the transfer of obedience from the will of one or of a few men to that will which is the norm or rule for all men.

The minister's teaching touches on the main problem of the egoist and hence of my thesis. The egoist thinks that he is a law unto himself, and through his thoughts, he unconsciously isolates himself in a narrow microcosm. But Rev Lyon goes on to make an important analogy between music and society. As the harmony of music derives from a freedom within law, the harmony of society will ultimately come when public and private interests unite in obedience to a freedom that comes through law:

> And even as in music, where all obey and concur to one end, so that each has the joy of contributing to a whole where by he is ravished and lifted up into the courts of heaven, so will it be in that crowning time of the millennial reign, when our daily prayer will be fulfilled, and one law shall be written on all hearts, and be the very structure of all thought and be the principle of all action. (xiii)[15]

In this analogy lies the motif that unifies the actions of Felix Holt. Each character is an exclusive microcosm having his own laws and singing his own different tune. Felix Holt confidently hopes to bring about social reforms, without the aid of women; Harold Transome seeks political reform that will help him to thrash a lord or two who thrashed him at Eton; Mrs Transome wants the exclusive power that will help her to choose the destinies of others; Esther Lyon is anxious to be a queen of niceties that exclude ideas of things that she does not like; Mrs Holt lives by vending drugs that are injurious to others, and even the gentle preacher of Malt Yard Church sees the truth only through the alembic of a one-sided religion.

Meanwhile Felix says to Rev Lyon, "Forgive me, Mr Lyon; I was wrong, and you are right." This confession of wrongness shows that he has a capacity to venerate what he sees to be true and the minister appropriately observes that "you have that mark of grace within you, that you are ready to acknowledge the justice of a rebuke."

But his iconoclasm reasserts itself in his confrontation with Esther. In his mockery of the young lady's vanities, he exhibits that irritating love of excess which the fanciful Mrs Holt says is "masterful beyond everything" (iv):

> "O, your niceties--I know what they are," said Felix, in his usual fortissimo. "They all go on your system of make-believe. 'Rottenness' may suggest what is unpleasant, so you'd better say 'sugar-plums', or something else such a long way off the fact that nobody is obliged to think of it. Those are your roundabout euphemisms that dress up swindling till it looks as well as honesty, and shoot with boiled pease instead of bullets. (v)

The speech ironically reflects the speaker's crude inexperience, and is a far cry from his later address in which Esther is hailed as one "who made a man's passion for her rush in one current with all the great aims of his life" (xxvii). After his first collision with Esther, Felix quickly draws the conclusion that women are created to hinder his great purposes:

> "I'll never marry, though I should have to live on raw turnips to subdue my flesh. I'll never look back and say, 'I had a fine purpose once--I meant to keep my hands clean, and my soul upright, and to look truth in the face; but pray excuse me, I have a wife and children --I must lie and simper a little, else they'll starve;' or 'My wife is nice, she must have her bread well buttered, and her feelings will be hurt if she is not thought genteel.' That is the lot Miss Esther is preparing for some man or other." (v)

This is one of the very few occasions in which he is caught reflecting, and his thought shows how limited his experience of women is. He does not consider women as individuals, but as a biological genre, endowed with only vegetative minds.[16] Ironically, his conventional ideas about women are opposed to his reform principles which purport to abolish privileges and give everyone an equal place in society. His concept of their function is iconoclastic in a most negative sense because it destroys what is good in one half of the human race. Later, he tells Esther that men cannot help loving women "and so they make themselves slaves to the petty desires of petty creatures. That's the way those who might do better spend their lives for nought--get checked in every great effort--toil with brain and limb for things that have no more to do with a manly life than tarts and confectionery. That's what makes women a curse: all life is stunted to suit their littleness" (x). In her essay on "Margaret Fuller and Mary

Wollstonecraft", George Eliot attributes women's pettiness to the meagre role that men assign to them, and insists that only equitable education can prepare them for intellectual and social roles in society.[17] By refusing to educate the Esthers for integration in society, Felix is wilfully opposing his selfish microcosm to the universal macrocosm, which, as Rev Lyon contends, is gradually moving towards a harmony in which every one enjoys the same freedom under the same law. Esther, re-echoing George Eliot's essay, tells Felix that a woman cannot "choose" because "she is dependent on what happens to her. She must take meaner things, because only meaner things are within her reach" (xxvii).

But Felix, in spite of himself, falls in love with Esther. "Felix was struggling as a firm man struggles with a temptation, seeing beyond it and disbelieving its lying promise" (xxvii). He needs the aesthetic principle symbolized in Esther as a mediator between his Idione and Hieria. But having decided beforehand that marriage is inconsistent with high ambitions, he tries hard to suppress his passion for Esther as he begins his self-imposed mission of taking "a little knowledge and common sense" to the coal-miners of Sproxton who spend their hard earned money on "boozing" at the Sugar Loaf.

He approaches politics in the same iconoclastic spirit in which he first meets Esther. At their initial meeting he tells Harold Transome:

> "I'm a Radical myself, and mean to work all my life long against privilege, monopoly, and oppression. But I would rather be a livery-servant proud of my master's title, than I would seem to make common cause with scoundrels who turn the best hopes of men into by-words for cant and dishonesty." (xvi)

Felix commits the blunder common to all George Eliot egoists--that of assuming that everyone else shares in his feelings. But Harold Transome, the narrator says, has an instinctive dislike for Felix's "impracticable notions of loftiness and purity." In fact he is intolerant of any form of opposition. His radicalism, as we shall see later, is totally opposed in aim to Felix's. "'Your energetic protest is needless here, Sir,' he tells Felix, offended at what sounded like a threat, and was certainly premature enough to be in bad taste."

When two characters that are psychologically incongruous are juxtaposed, they often mutually repel each other. The antithesis of Felix's forthright honesty and Harold's sophisticated equivocations, dramatized in this scene, provide the essential moral pattern of Felix Holt. Felix's unguarded attack on "privilege, monopoly, and oppression" is ironically an indictment of Transome's radicalism.

Meanwhile, Felix tells Esther that "he felt that they must not marry--that they would ruin each other's lives" (xxx). He wants her to know, however, that his decision to be apart from her is a sacrifice. But he finds the thought of renunciation easier to entertain than to make real. "I want you to tell me--once--that you know it would be easier to me to give myself up to loving and being loved, as other men do, when they can, than to--" (xxxii). Felix is struggling between that arrogance that isolates him in a narrow microcosm and a passion which tends to unite his love and duty in the object that he venerates. The narrator very relevantly observes that for the first time the usually too confident Felix loses his "self-possession" and "turned his eyes away." Just as his confession of error to Rev Lyon shows that he is capable of moral regeneration, this conflict with love and duty demonstrates that he is not insensitive to aesthetic appeals. Esther senses the possibility of regeneration in her lover when, instead of being insulted by his confession, she makes a suggestion which leaves room for a change of mind. "What you have chosen to do has only convinced me that your love would be the better worth having." As my thesis emphasizes, Felix's actions originate in his mind; when he modifies his thoughts, his actions will change for the better.

At the election riots, Felix surrenders himself totally to the destructive side of his life. He inadvertently kills a constable and is taken prisoner. Commenting on his involvement in the riot, the narrator says that "nature never makes men who are at once energetically sympathetic and minutely calculating." The riot dramatizes his urgent need for a constant companion who will play the role of a reflective mind for him. Because of age and other duties, Rev Lyon can no longer perform this function.

Suffering inculcates in him a sense of his limitations as an individual and his mind begins to change. When Esther visits him in jail, she finds nothing of the intolerance that originates in the exclusiveness of his iconoclastic nature. Although he still clings to his ideals, he has modified his views on how to attain the goals of reform:

> "But I'm proof against that word failure. I've seen behind it. The only failure a man ought to fear is failure in cleaving to the purpose he sees to be best. As to just the amount of result he may see from his particular work--that's a tremendous uncertainty: the universe has not been arranged for the gratification of his feelings. As long as a man sees and believes in some great good, he'll prefer working towards that in the way he's best fit for come what may. I put effects at their minimum, but I'd rather have the minimum of effect, if it's of the sort I care for, than the maximum of effect I don't care for--" (xlv)

This is for Felix an important turning point. He is now intellectually conscious enough to see his fault as originating in that egocentricity which makes itself the centre of creation. The macrocosm no longer exists for him exclusively to reform. Since he cannot control results, he is willing to subordinate his will to the general will. By accepting to work for "minimum effects" he at once emancipates himself from the arrogance of egoism which makes him see his work as more important than that of Esther or anyone else.

When, at his trial, Esther enters the box to give evidence in his defense "a vibration, quick as light" appears to go through the court and to shake Felix who has hitherto seemed impassive. "A sort of gleam seemed to shoot across his face, and anyone close to him would have seen that his hand, which lay on the edge of the dock, trembled" (xlvi). Esther's bravery makes him change his mind about women. Esther will be an asset, not a hindrance.

Upon release from jail, Felix returns to Esther, no longer willing to go it alone. Esther has not accepted Harold, because she sees in Felix's ideals new vistas for serving humanity. Felix gratefully accepts her love with promises "to be a much better fellow than I ever thought of being." And "with a laugh as sweet as the morning thrush," Esther replies, "I call that retribution" (li). Perhaps, she should have said "regeneration."

Henry James argues that the marriage "makes no conclusion."[18] In reality, the unity of the novel lies in the marriage. In Esther, Felix finds that elusive something, "perfect enough to be venerated,"[19] which his phrenologist says will unify his life. But beyond unifying his iconoclastic and venerating lives, the marriage helps to liberate him from his egoistic microcosm, and thus places him in a position in which his ideas on "Reform" become meaningful, not only to the working classes but also the the Transomes and the Debarrys, who can only believe in him through Esther.

Esther Lyon

Esther's ambiguous relationship with Felix and Harold is vital to the moral pattern of Felix Holt. This relationship originates in the dualism of her nature. She has two selves: a selfish Byronic nature that traps her in her Idione and an aesthetically and morally discriminating self that is to liberate her from her Idione in order to unite her with her Hieria. As the novel begins, she is dominated by her Idione. The reader first encounters her as "a light-footed, sweet-voiced Queen" of her egoistic microcosm. The values of her world are exclusively derived from the odour of "beeswax candles, finest cambric handkerchiefs, and freshest gloves." Her mind, like Rosamond Vincy's or Hetty Sorrel's, delights in things that are only superficially aesthetic. She is "alive to the finest shades of manner, to the nicest distinctions of tone and accent; she had a little code of her own about scents and colours, textures and behaviour by which she secretly condemned or sanctioned all things and persons" (vi). Assuming, as Henry James's Isabel Archer does, her tastes to be the touchstone of culture, she proceeds to classify people by the way they appear to her. The Misses Jermyn are not ladylike because their cambric handkerchiefs have "obtrusive scent;" she will not walk with her father because "his old clothes had a smoky odour" and because "when people spoke to him in the street, it was his wont, instead of remarking on the weather and passing on, to pour forth in an absent manner some reflections that were occupying his mind about the traces of the Divine government, or about a peculiar incident narrated in the life of the eminent Mr Richard Baxter."

These thoughts, uncomplimentary to those against whom they are directed, raise in her mind an inordinate sense of her own superiority and determine all her actions. "She was well satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste, never doubting that hers was the highest standard. . . . Her own pretty instep, just rising from a kid slipper, her irreproachable nails and delicate wrist, were the objects of delighted consciousness to her." This form of uncritical self-satisfaction is the touchstone of egoism in George Eliot. Esther cannot detach her aesthetic tastes from her Idione. But for a beautiful object to mediate between the indiviual's microcosm and the larger macrocosm that envelopes the individual, it must be detached from the selfish ego. Esther's tastes lead only to dissatisfaction: "she was not contented with her life: she seemed to herself to be surrounded with ignoble uninteresting conditions, from which there was no issue." As in the case of Mrs Transome, discontent generates thoughts which tend to make life nothing but a lottery: "She fancied that she should have loved her mother better than she was able to love her father."

Felix's microcosm clashes with Esther's at a crucial moment when the heroine's contagious misery is wrecking, not only her young life, but also that of her father Rev Lyon. The minister, we are told "prayed and pleaded for her with tears, humbling himself for her spiritual deficiencies in the privacy of his study; and then came downstairs to find himself in timorous subjection to her wishes." It is the character of egoism to feed on the weakness of the less egoistic natures; the more Rev Lyon humbles himself, the more arrogant his daughter becomes. Her egoism has the "blind wilfulness that sees no terrors, no many-linked consequences, no bruises and wounds of those whose cords it tightens."

Esther loses no time in showing Felix what the values of her microcosm are. Miss Jermyn, she says, "considers herself a judge of what is ladylike, and she is vulgarity personified--with large feet, and the most odious scent on her handkerchief, and a bonnet that looks like 'The Fashion' printed in capital letters" (v). But Felix, who sees no difference in vanities--Esther's or Miss Jermyn's--replies sarcastically: "One sort of fine ladyism is as good as another." George Eliot often achieves dramatic intensity by juxtaposing two minds that have different outlooks in life. Far from impressing Felix, as expected, Esther's "refined" tastes ironically invoke his contempt. "'O yes,' said Felix, contemptuously. "A fine lady" reads Byron also, and admires Childe Harold--gentlemen of unspeakable woes, who employ a hair-dresser, and look seriously at themselves in the glass." Nothing is more painful to the egoistic mind than seeing a resemblance of itself in the object that it despises. The author is to use a similar device to shock Harold Transome out of his smug egoism. Meanwhile, Esther recoils in anger while Felix goes on "triumphantly" to expose the emptiness of her fine "lady-ism". "A fine lady is a squirrel-headed thing, with small airs, and small notions, about as applicable to the business of life as a pair of tweezers to the clearing of a forest"(v).

Esther does not as yet know that her life is being wasted in small trifles. In a later interview, Felix is to try to show her that true aesthetic taste cannot be separated from the world of the intellect:

> "But by opinions you mean men's thoughts about great subjects, and by taste you mean their thoughts about small ones: dress, behaviour, amusements, ornaments."
>
> "Well--yes--or rather, their sensibilities about those things."
>
> "It comes to the same thing; thoughts, opinions, knowledge, are only a sensibility to facts and ideas. If I understand a geometrical problem, it is because I have a sensibility to the way in which lines and figures are related to each other; and I want you to see that the creature who has the sensibilities that you call opinions, is simply a lower, pettier sort of thing--an insect that

> notices the shaking of the table, but never notices the thunder." (x)

In Esther, the aesthetic self is separated from the moral or intellectual, just as affection and duty are segregated in Felix. The two characters are unconsciously drawn to each other: Felix needs Esther's beauty to reconcile his two selves; Esther needs Felix in order to unite her aesthetic life with a sense of moral purpose. Felix finds beneath Esther's egoism a promise of a higher life. "No, you are not an insect. That is what exasperates me at your making a boast of littleness. You have enough understanding to make it wicked that you should add one more to the women who hinder men's lives from having any nobleness in them." But he feels that her contempt for her father's ideas and religion emanate from the frivolous side of her nature. He encourages her to submit to her father because his "principles are greater and worthier than what guides your life." But Esther has only an elementary concept of religion. "How am I to oblige you? By joining the Church?" she asks. In George Eliot, to be religious does not simply mean being a member of a congregation. Felix, for instance, does not belong to any religious organization. His religion is radicalism, and he owes his conversion to "six weeks' debauchery." Rev Lyon's religion of humanity does not derive from the Malthouse Yard Church, but from his affection for an "unregenerate Catholic." Religion is self-surrender to a higher purpose which mediates between the character's egoism and the moral macrocosm. Felix associates Esther's egoism with the absence of a religious purpose; in this context, a religious purpose is synonymous with a serious, moral purpose which gives depth to existence. In the absence of a religious purpose, Esther, like Gwendolen Harleth, can only do what she likes. And doing what one likes is often singing out of tune with others. Felix's energetic reprimand acts as a catalytic agent which prompts a healthy reaction in Esther:

> There was a strange contradiction of impulses in her mind in those first moments. She could not bear that Felix should not respect her, yet she could not bear that he should see her bend before his denunciation. . . . He was ill-bred, he was rude, he had taken an unwarrantable liberty; yet his indignant words were a tribute to her: he thought she was worth more pains than the women of whom he took no notice.

This struggle in Esther's mind is the seed of moral consciousness, because a desire for the good opinion of others, if sincere, is a movement towards one's Hieria. In spite of the obstinacy of her egoism, Felix has awakened in her a passion for the love of someone beyond herself. "Had he ever for a moment imagined that she had thought of him in the light of a man who would make love to her? . . . But did he love her one little bit, and was that the reason why he wanted her to change?" She too needs an object of veneration to which her affections may be transferred, now that her faith in herself appears shaky.[20] "For the first time in her life," says the narrator, "Esther felt herself seriously shaken in her self-contentment. She knew there was a mind to which she appeared trivial, narrow, selfish." For "Queen Esther" this is a novel experience and it "burned itself into her memory." Her mind begins to change, and for the first time she is "stung into a new consciousness concerning her father. Was it true that his life was so much worthier than her own?" (x) She is making efforts to burst out of her microcosm. Later, Esther is to say to Rev Lyon, "Father, I have not been good to you; but I will be, I will be." By this confession, she has taken an important step towards liberating herself from her microcosm:

> Very slight words and deeds may have a sacramental efficacy, if we can cast our self-love behind us, in order to say or do them. And it has been well believed through many ages that the beginning of compunction is the beginning of a new life; that the mind which sees itself blameless may be called dead in trespasses--in trespasses on the love of others, in trespasses on their weakness, in trespasses on all those great claims which are the image of our own deed. (xiii)

The use of the term "sacramental" to describe Esther's new experience appropriately recalls Felix's insistence that she must have a religion. It suggests a rebirth, while the narrator's pointed attack on the trespasses on others' weaknesses anticipates the Transomes, whose smug self-contentedness, that admits of no conscience probing doubts, contrasts with Esther's willingness to take blame for her errors. But her newly awakened interest in her father does not quite satisfy her needs for a religion. For Esther, as for Maggie Tulliver or Romola, the loss of a belief creates a vacuum which is initially filled by feelings of disenchantment. Felix has raised in her visions of an ideal something that is only looming, and which she cannot as yet see clearly because her vision is fragmented by the claims of her egoistic microcosm:

> Her life was a heap of fragments, and so were her thoughts: some great energy was needed to bind them together. Esther was beginning to lose her complacency at her own wit and criticism; to lose the sense of superiority in an awakening need for reliance on one whose vision was wider, whose nature was purer and stronger than her own. But then, she said to herself, that "one" must be tender to her, not rude and predominating in his manners. A man with any chivalry in him could never adopt a scolding tone towards a woman--that is, towards a charming woman. But Felix had no chivalry in him. He loved lecturing and opinion too well ever to love any woman. (xv)

Her conversion is still incomplete. She is too inexperienced to grasp the meaning of the vision that Felix talks about.[21] More importantly, she appears to be seeking a new idol for her egoism to replace the lost one. She therefore sees the new vision in terms of her personal relationship with her teacher, but finding this relationship unflattering to her ego, she looks for an admirer elsewhere. Her dreams of a chivalric worshipper show how intellectually and emotionally she is distanced from Felix; they anticipate her closeness with Harold Transome. In fact she is awakened from her troubled reverie by no other than a real knight in shining armour--Harold Transome:

> Esther felt a pleasure quite new to her as she saw his finely-embrowned face and full bright eyes turned towards her with an air of deference by which gallantry must commend itself to a refined woman who is not absolutely free from vanity. . . . Esther was perfectly aware as he took a chair near her, that he was under some admiring surprise at her appearance and manner. How could it be otherwise? She believed that in the eyes of a high-bred man no young lady in Treby could equal her: she felt a glow of delight at the sense that she was being looked at. (xv)

While Esther is elated by what she imagines Harold to be thinking of her, Harold is enjoying her presence as "a pleasant diversion" that must be kept "within such bounds" that she should "never interfere with the course of his serious ambition." Harold is the fulfilment of that side of her nature which is concerned with "scents" and "cambric handkerchiefs." He appeals to her egoism and makes her think only of herself, but Felix forces her to look beyond her Idione.

But the seeds of moral consciousness which Felix has sown in her cannot be totally uprooted. She is irresistibly drawn to her bullying pedagogue by some power that she cannot discern, by some force that has become pressing. She cannot stop herself from going to him to confess that she is not "offended" at his reproofs and that she is not "ungenerous." After the visit she is more convinced than before that "there is something greater and better in him than I had imagined." She wishes to have "a mind equal to his" and to be able to "choose the same life." She reflects that "if Felix Holt were to love her, her life would be exalted into something quite new--into a sort of difficult blessedness, such as one may imagine in beings who are conscious of painfully growing into the possession of higher powers" (xxii). Like Romola and Dorothea, her love is an unconscious effort to unify affection and duty for ends that are beatific in nature. Felix is her moral life, just as Harold is her vain nature.

One of the benign results of her apostleship is that she is morally and emotionally prepared, in the way that Harold Transome is not, for the knowledge of her true parentage. When eventually she learns that her real father was an aristocrat, she does not regret her upbringing in a humbler situation. Rev Lyon's poor life, she avows, is "the best life," because it is a life in which "one bears and does everything because of some great and strong feeling--so that this and that in one's circumstances don't signify" (xxvi). She no longer wishes to choose; life is no longer a lottery. Later she tells Felix, in respect of her parentage, that "I hardly know whether it is pain, or something better than pleasure. It has made me see things I was blind to before--depths in my father's nature" (xxvii). The revelation has drawn her closer to Rev Lyon, the father who loves and cares for her, than ever before. Knowledge has brought her a step closer to her Hieria.

But like Romola's, Esther's regeneration, at this stage, is not detached from the actions of her reformer. When Felix decides to abandon her in the interest of his great duty, the narrator observes that the loss of her mentor may mean "backsliding" for the heroine because "the first religious experience of her life--the first self-questioning, the first voluntary subjection, the first longing to acquire the strength of greater motives and obey the more strenuous rule--had come to her through Felix Holt. No wonder that she felt as if the loss of him were inevitable sliding" (xxvii). Nevertheless, she has acquired, through Felix, a sense of purpose which has changed her mental attitude. As this thesis emphasizes, a change in mental attitude is a step towards emancipating oneself from one's microcosm.

Meanwhile, her dreams of queenship suddenly come true. As Felix is whisked off to prison, she is royally conducted to Transome Court. Fate having made her the inheritor of the Transome properties, she has now the long awaited opportunity of becoming a lady, of marrying her knight, and of living in the splendours of "rose-leaves', "soft carpet," and "servants filled with adoring respect" (xxxvii). For a time she enjoys "with more or less keenness, a rehearsal of that demeanour amongst luxuries and dignities which had often been a part of her day-dreams, and the rehearsal included the reception of more and more emphatic attentions from Harold" (xliii). She even begins to camouflage her affections for Felix, because being in love with him will seem to Harold like "a degradation of her taste and refinement."

In the midst of her luxury, however, she does at moments remember Felix's warning: "I want you to have such a vision of the future that you may never lose your best self" (xxvii).[22] She is perceptive enough to see that "this life at Transome Court was not the life of her daydreams: there was dullness already in its ease, and in the absence of high demand; and there was a vague consciousness that the love of this not unfascinating man who hovered about her gave an air of moral mediocrity to all her prospects" (xliii). Harold Transome, like Grandcourt, fascinates young women as the crocodile fascinates its prey. While Esther, in spite of her skepticism, thinks that her lot has been chosen for her by Harold's love--the "love that was surrounding her with the influence of a garden on a summer morning"--Harold is preparing to make her paradise a prison. "She was clearly a woman that could be governed," he reflects. "She was too charming for him to fear that she should ever be obstinate or interfering." In his relationship with Esther as with politics, Harold is the moral antithesis of Felix. Ironically his view of women, as toys to be played with for diversion, demonstrates the futility of Esther's hopes. But he functions in the novel to help Esther complete her moral education.

Esther has a great perceptive ability, and had Harold been aware of this he could have won her affections. But Harold is particularly insensitive to others' feelings. At an opportune moment when Esther is flattering herself that she has power to make him do what "she liked", he blunders and thus frightens her away. He blandly tells her that his former wife "Harry's mother had been a slave --was bought, in fact" (xliii). The narrator adds the comment that "it was impossible for Harold to preconceive the effect this had on Esther" because of a "natural disqualification for judging of a girl's feelings." Harold's utterance is a revelation that has shaken Esther's world from its foundations. She is to be a slave, not a queen of her garden of roses.

Following this episode, Esther tells Felix that she now understands "better than I used to do." "The words of Felix at last seemed strangely to fit her own experience," observes the wiser narrator (xlv). Esther's mind is gradually being prepared for the renunciation that she eventually has to make. Felix reminds her that she has bought her knowledge dearly: "Remember you have cost a great price--don't throw what is precious away. I shall want the news that you have a happiness worthy of you." In George Eliot, life has an intrinsic value over and above the external circumstances which surround it. In Romola, Bernado del Nero also warns the heroine against sacrificing her precious sensibility to the gilded magnificence of Tito.

Felix's warning returns Esther to her moral world and she remembers the past that links her with the Malt Yard, with Felix, and with an existence that is larger than that which Transome Court offers. Gradually she becomes disenchanted with the world of her vanities and the objects that she once believed in. Her insurgent sense of disapprobation is not abated by what she feels about her hostess's unrelieved suffering: "The sense that Mrs Transome was unhappy, affected Esther more and more deeply as the growing familiarity which relaxed the efforts of the hostess revealed more and more the threadbare tissue of this majestic lady's life" (xlix).

When Harold discovers that he is the bastard son of the much despised lawyer Jermyn, he comes to Esther in the subdued garb of a humiliated, suffering suppliant. A Harold blighted by fortune is as fascinating to Esther as a Rochester deformed by fire is to Jane Eyre. Since meeting with Felix, Esther has been growing in sensibility, has become sympathetic to human suffering. Harold, in his new circumstances, has also become part of the suffering humanity with whom she ought to sympathize. Esther is thrown into a perplexity the nature of which must be properly understood if her suffering is not to seem trivial when compared with that of

Maggie Tulliver, Romola, or Dorothea Brooke. Harold's suffering does touch her "keenly", and she "wished at that moment, that she could have loved this man with her whole heart. The tears came into her eyes; she did not speak, but, with an angel's tenderness in her face, she laid her hand on his sleeve" (xlix). It is for Esther a moment of supreme crisis; renunciation is easier when the conflict is between good and bad. Harold has shown a nobility in his suffering which has taken Esther by surprise.

Left alone in the quiet seclusion of her chamber, Esther does what Dinah Morris and Dorothea Brooke do at the moment of a great crisis: "She drew up her blinds, liking to see the grey sky, where there were some veiled glimmerings of moonlight, and the lines of the forever running river, and the bending movement of the black trees. She wanted the largeness of the world to help her thought." This symbolic act of looking for outside help in the time of trouble shows that she is willing to burst out of her microcosm, by liberating her Hieria from the prison of her Idione. It reminds the reader once more of the fable of Idione and Hieria. Meanwhile, Esther makes a mental review of her past in relationship with the present. Her affections for her father and the Malt Yard are sacred. But if her love for Felix has been hallowed by time, her regard for Harold has been consecrated by suffering. The vision of uniting her love with her duty, she realizes, cannot become actual "without paying a heavy price for it, such as we must pay for all that is greatly good." She now knows from experience that love does not make "all things easy: it makes us choose what is difficult." Perhaps, if assured of Felix's love, she can with much more ease renounce her claims to Transome Court in exchange for a life of poverty and privation. But she must choose without the assurance of Felix's love; "the presence and the love of Felix Holt" will have to remain "a quivering hope, not a certainty" (xlix).[23] But on the other hand, there is "Harold Transome's love, no longer a hovering fancy with which she played, but become a serious fact, seemed to threaten her with a stifling oppression."

While engulfed in these conflicting emotions an unexpected help reaches her though the door which she has left open. The sight of Mrs Transome pacing the corridor at midnight, like a blighted Lady Macbeth, presents to her, not only an unflattering image of a future Esther as a Mrs Transome, but also a picture of suffering which Harold can certainly assuage.[24] Harold's own suffering appears to her not to be separated from his arrogant disregard for the feelings of others. He, therefore, does not deserve the sympathy which he expects from her. Harold's impatience with his mother reminds her of Felix's patient regard for the termagant Mrs Holt.

Esther's mind is made up for her by the nature of Mrs

Transome's suffering. In resigning "all claim to the Transome estates" for a life of poverty with those she loves, she tells Harold, "There is nothing in all this place--nothing since ever I came here--I could care for so much as that you should sit down by her [his mother] now."[25] These words, which must have reminded Esther of her own previous isolation from her father, show the completeness of her regeneration. Her renunciation is not a triumph over the suffering of Mrs Transome and her illegitimate son, but a victory of her moral life over that side of her nature which is rather too sensitive to the odour of "scents" and "cambric handkerchiefs." She has been able to apprehend the vision that Felix talks of--the vision which urges the extension of human sympathies as the highest good. Her discovery of herself is achieved through discovery of an ethical harmony that embraces society as a whole.[26] Her subsequent marriage with her pedagogue is a unification of her moral and aesthetic lifes for the service of the community at large. Where there is harmony, the interests of the family and the community are synonymous. Her marriage is an unselfish act of love which liberates her totally from her microcosm.

Harold Transome

If Felix is a radical who is fond of banging and smashing because he cannot find anything worthy enough to be venerated, Harold is a radical whose fondness for banging and smashing originates in an innate inability to venerate anything except himself. "I always meant to be an Englishman, and thrash a lord or two who thrashed me at Eton" (i), he serenely tells his mother. His political and social ambitions are attempts to subordinate others' microcosms to the claims of his own. Like Felix, he never doubts the rightness of his objectives, but, unlike Felix, he does not tolerate any opposition. With "a strong faith in his luck," he tells his mother that he never forgets places and people--"how they look and what can be done with them" (i). He is so thoroughly wrapped up in his Idione that he is quite unable to enter into anyone else's feelings. Reflecting on his consummate egoism, the usually perceptive Esther says:

> He had a way of virtually measuring the value of everything by the contribution it made to his own pleasure. His very good-nature was unsympathetic: never came from any thorough understanding or deep respect for what was in the mind of the person he obliged or indulged; it was like his kindness to his mother--an arrangement of his for the happiness of others, which, if they were sensible, ought to succeed. (xliii)

He imagines that the purpose of the Reform Bill is to give him a much needed opportunity "to obliterate tradition and melt down enchased gold heirlooms into plating for the egg-spoons of 'the people'." Of course by the people is meant the highborn and prosperous Harold Transome. From this primary assumption arises the conflicts which affect the fortunes of all the characters in Felix Holt.

The first opposition to his self-centred approach to politics comes from his mother, who is disturbed by her son's iconoclastic tendencies, which threaten the interests of his own class. "It seems to me that a man owes something to his birth and station, and has no right to take up this notion or the other, just as it suits his fancy; still less to work at the overthrow of his class." Mrs Transome's political ideas may be selfish and anachronistic, but Harold's defence of his position does nothing to educate her:

> "Mother," said Harold, not angrily or with any raising of his voice, but in a quick, impatient manner, as if the scene must be got through as quickly as possible; "it is natural that you should think in this way. Women, very properly, don't change their views, but keep to the notions in which they have been brought up. It doesn't signify what they think--they are not called upon to judge or to act. You must really leave me to take my own course in these matters, which properly belong to men. Beyond that, I will gratify any wish you choose to mention. You shall have a new carriage and a pair of bays all to yourself; you shall have the house done up in first-rate style, and I am not thinking of marrying. But let us understand that there shall be no further collision between us on subjects on which I must be master of my own actions." (ii)

Felix also quarrels with his mother over his radicalism, but where he uses radicalism to teach his mother, Harold uses it to mystify his. The essential difference between the two radicals is that the one discusses his thoughts and is willing to be corrected, the other is intolerant of opposition and does not admit of his errors; the one excludes women from his ideal microcosm because women elect to be trivial, the other excludes them because they ought to be trivial. In spite of his professions of liberalism, Harold, like a cruel deity, seems to predetermine people from egoistic assumptions. Women are "slight things" of whom one may be fond only "in the intervals of business." The Jermyns are socially worthless, but may be used for political ends; "Southern fellows" are "wonderful" servants created to make "one's life easy." Oriental women are good because they make wonderful slave-wives; English women are "consumptive" and "lackadaisical" because they interfere with "a man's life." In place of the social harmony with which Felix and Rev Lyon are concerned, he substitutes an ego-centred principle which demands that everyone conform to the ideals of his microcosm. "He was not to be turned aside from any course he had chosen," says the narrator. He is "fond of mastery, and good-natured enough to wish that everyone about him should like his mastery; not caring greatly to know other people's thoughts, and ready to despise them as blockheads if their thoughts differed from his, and yet solicitous that they should have no colourable reason for slight thoughts about him"(ii). In all instances, the claims of his microcosm are to be considered supreme. And he is so certain of the rightness of his position that he can afford to be totally insensitive to the feelings of others. His dialogue with his mother, about distributing bedrooms, on the very day that he returns from the Orient, shows how securely the shell of his microcosm protects him from the outside world:

> "I suppose you have been used to great luxury; these rooms look miserable to you, but you can soon make any alteration you like."
>
> "O, I must have a private sitting-room fitted up for myself downstairs. . . . But there's a bedroom downstairs, with an ante-room, I remember, that would do for my man Dominic and the little boy. I should like to have that."
>
> "Your father has slept there for years. He will be like a distracted insect, and never know where to go, if you alter the track he has to walk in."
>
> "That's a pity. I hate going upstairs."
>
> "There is the steward's room: it is not used and might be turned into a bedroom. I can't offer you my room, for I sleep upstairs."
>
> "No; I'm determined not to sleep upstairs . . ." (i)

Harold's insensitivity has that atmosphere of calmness about it which proceeds from a habitual attitude of self-indulgence that also characterizes his approach to politics. He enters politics in order to indulge a selfish whim of thrashing a lord or two. This selfish purpose leads to the assumption that ethical laws ought to be suspended to allow him to gratify his fanciful desires. Acting from this assumption, he engages the services of an immoral lawyer Jermyn with the intention of using him for the election and after that "he must be got rid of" (ii). But Jermyn is also an egoist who acts on a principle similar to

Harold's. The conflict that arises between the two egoists sets off a sequence of bizarre events which ironically culminate in the loss of the election, and in complicating further the disputes about the Transome family properties.

Opposed to Harold's naive radicalism is his conservative nature, which cares more for "birth and possession" than it cares for liberal ideas. His uncle, the facetious Rev Lingon, concludes from his nephew's explication of his political views that "if the mob can't be turned back, a man of family must try and head the mob" (ii). Because his radicalism is "unreal", it lacks the religious fervency which sanctifies the earnestness of Felix's or Rev Lyon's liberalism. When Felix complains of the malpractices of Harold's agents, he pleads for the tolerance of a double ethical standard that only serves to show the moral gulf that separates the two radicals:

> "It is rather too much for any man to keep the consciences of all his party," said Harold. "If you had lived in the East, as I have, you would be more tolerant. More tolerant, for example, of an active industrious selfishness, such as we have here, though it may not always be quite scrupulous: you would see how much better it is than an idle selfishness. I have heard it said, a bridge is a good thing--worth helping to make, though half the men who worked at it were rogues." (xvi)

Harold simply refuses to confront the moral issue which worries Felix. It is a characteristic of his egoism to use different standards for radical and conservative ends. He refuses, for instance, the application of Jermyn's "active industrious selfishness" to his private affairs--he is very conservative on matters concerning family and property. His radicalism is limited to politics. Jermyn is Harold's second self. He represents that "active industrious" side of his life which is morally insensitive, and really morally repulsive to the conservative side of his nature. The great paradox of his life is that his two natures mutually repel each other.

After the election, when his radical interests are over, he decides to get rid of the lawyer, who has become a moral incubus. "I will arrange nothing amicably with him." he tells his mother. "If he has ever done anything scandalous as our agent, let him bear the infamy. And the right way to throw infamy on him is to show the world that he has robbed us, and that I mean to punish him" (xxxvi). In this desire to visit an enemy with dire vengeance, Harold is indulging the same habit of thought which makes him wish to thrash a lord or two who thrashed him at Eton. And just as his radical amorality generates conflicts which ruin his political hopes, his conservative morality results in a clash of egoisms which destroys his private existence.

Jermyn confronts his hunter with the desperation of a cornered brute:

> Jermyn walked quickly and quietly close to him. The two men were of the same height, and before Harold looked round Jermyn's voice was saying, close to his ear, not in a whisper, but in a hard, incisive, disrespectful and yet not loud

> tone, "Mr Transome, I must speak to you in private."
>
> The sound jarred through Harold with a sensation all the more insufferable because of the revulsion from the satisfied, almost elated, state in which it had seized him. . . . Jermyn felt that he had words within him that were fangs to clutch his obstinate strength. . . .
>
> "You will repent else--for your mother's sake."
>
> At that sound quick as a leaping flame, Harold had struck Jermyn across the face with his whip. . . . Jermyn, a powerful man, had instantly thrust out his hand and clutched Harold hard by the clothes just below the throat, pushing him slightly so as to make him stagger. . . .
>
> "Let me go, you scoundrel!" said Harold, fiercely, "or I'll be the death of you."
>
> "Do," said Jermyn, in a grating voice; "I am your father."
>
> In the thrust by which Harold had been made to stagger backward a little, the two men had got very near the long mirror. They were both white; both had anger and hatred in their faces; the hands of both were upraised. As Harold heard the last terrible words he started at a leaping throb that went through him, and in the start turned his eyes away from Jermyn's face. He turned them on the same face in the glass with his own beside it, and saw the hated fatherhood reasserted. (xlvii)

This is a powerful representation of the clash of two microcosms that are too self-centered to accept a compromise. Harold's Idione and Hieria at last catch up with each other, but unlike Hieria, Harold does not accept his vision in the mirror. His last illusion--that of high birth--is dramatically shattered. Just as Miss Jermyn's artificiality is used to reflect Esther's moral shortcomings, lawyer Jermyn's face mirrors an aspect of Harold's moral life which he despises in the lawyer. "It was the most serious moment in Harold Transome's life," says the narrator. "For the first time the iron had entered into his soul, and he felt the hard pressure of our common lot, the yoke of that mighty resistless destiny laid upon us by the acts of other men as well as our own" (xlix). Life is really not a lottery in which he is always to be the winner. For the first time, he feels the effects that proceed from "the mutual influence of dissimilar destinies" (iii). But he refuses to accept his destiny: "All the pride of his nature rebelled against his sonship" (xlviii). This rebelliousness against the claims of a past that destiny has made for him is a supreme act of egoism. It is an attempt to usurp the role of God--an attempt which confines him in his Idione and thus makes him incapable of learning, like Felix and Esther, from his experience. In his pride he withdraws into himself. In George Eliot, knowledge of self leads into identification with one's Hieria or the suffering of others. Harold cannot sympathize with his mother, because he has stunted his moral life by refusing to burst out of the cocoon of his narrow microcosm. By turning away from his suffering mother, he logically loses the sympathy of Esther who has been attracted to him through an empathic relationship with his own sorrows: "That young presence which had flitted like a white new-winged dove over all the saddening relics and new finery of Transome Court, could not find its home there" (L).[27] The flight of the dove, the symbol of a higher spiritual life, shows not only that Harold Transome does not deserve Esther, but also that he is incapable of sustaining the inward fire that feeds radicalism. It is significant that the dove builds its nest on the warm hearth of Felix's home.

Mrs Transome

Mrs Transome's world is that in which power is concentrated in the hands of a domineering mother, adored by a clever, grateful son and surrounded by offspring and wealth. At the root of Mrs Transome's concept of her egoistic microcosm is the primary assumption that life is a form of "lottery" that can be manipulated to anyone's advantage. Acting on this assumption, she contrives to usurp the authority of God. She despises her husband because he is not clever and strong and commits adultery in order to beget an adoring clever son. The make her clever son the nominal head of the Transome wealth, she desires "that her first, rickety ugly imbecile child should die" (i).

In these desires Mrs Transome forgets that others too do have equivalent centres of selves. As a matter of fact, while she is busy constructing a world in which she is the centre of life, her son is also building his own self-centred world in which she is assigned only the minor role of a piece of furniture. And even her ex-lover, who does not come into her scheme of things, is also erecting a microcosm whose structure can only be sustained by her disgrace. But her wish for the death of her son is, like Harold's rejection of his sonship, a supreme act of egoism which stultifies the moral senses. "Such desires", says the narrator, "make life a hideous lottery." When the hated son dies, life does not, in consequence, become rosy for Mrs Transome; instead, it becomes a series of disenchanting episodes of fears and anxieties interrupted only by "little immediate cares and occupations" (i).

By arrogating to herself the role of destiny, Mrs Transome sets off the sequence of events which ruin her, Harold, and her ex-lover Jermyn. Upon his return to England, Harold strips his mother of her powers, "You shall have nothing to do now but to be grandmamma on satin cushions." For a power-loving nature like Mrs Transome's this is a paralyzing stroke, and she rebels, "You must excuse me from the satin cushions. That is a part of the old woman's duty I am not prepared for. I am used to be chief bailiff, and to sit in the saddle two or three hours every day" (i). Her microcosm is in collision with a metal-clamped microcosm that cannot be broken. Harold Transome, whose "busy thoughts were imperiously determined by habits which has no reference to any woman's feeling," remains obdurate. "Phew-ew! Jermyn manages the estate badly, then," he insists. "That will not last under my reign." Like his mother, he too wants to create his own chances. By manipulating fortune, Mrs Transome has made Jermyn an inalienable part of the family, and hence Harold's desire to lop him off is a denial of the validity of the past created by his own mother. If Mrs Transome continues in power, a rift with history can be avoided, but robbed of power all she can do is to beg her son "to arrange things amicably" in order "to avoid all further scandal and contests in the family" (xxxvii). Poor mother! she is forced to talk of the past, which she has created, in the language of riddles unintelligible to her obstinate son. But like King Oedipus, Harold fails to understand hints. On the other hand, Mrs Transome's ex-lover Jermyn, who, in matters of self-interest, is as tenaciously intransigent as Mr Transome, insists that she reveal the unpalatable past in order to help him to escape from the consequences of his actions. "It is not to be supposed that Harold would go on against me . . . .if he knew the whole truth" (xlii). Stung by the indelicacy of her ex-lover's egoism, she withdraws further into herself and refuses to make the confession which alone can liberate her from her microcosm.

Mrs Transome suffers because she cannot escape from herself. She is morally and socially trapped in her ego. She, we are told, has "no ultimate analysis of things that went beyond blood and family. . . . She had never seen behind the canvas with which her life was hung" (xl). She is so paralyzed within the narrow confines of her microcosm that she can neither share in social activities not in the feelings of altruism which integrate a character into a healthy public life. After the initial quarrel with her son she withdraws entirely into her Idione:

> She stood before a tall mirror, going close to it and looking at her face with hard scrutiny, as if it were unrelated to herself. No elderly face can be handsome looked at in that way; every little detail is startlingly prominent, and the effect of the whole is lost. She saw the dried-up complexion, and the deep lines of bitter discontent about the mouth.
>
> "I am a hag!" she said to herself (she was accustomed to give her thoughts a very sharp outline), "an ugly old woman who happen to be his mother. That is what he sees in me, as I see a stranger in him. I shall count for nothing. I was foolish to expect anything else." (i)

Mrs Transome has never really worshipped anything beyond her beautiful face which she, like Gwendolen Harleth and Rosamond Vincy, believes that everyone else ought to adore. When she finds the object of her adoration cracked and no longer worthy of her veneration, she blames it for her misfortunes instead of regretting her narcissism. Elsewhere, she blames God for the woes of women: "God was cruel when he made women" (xxix). This narcissistic tendency to transfer blame from the self to other objects is a denial of her experience as a member of the human society. In George Eliot'~~s more~~ morally conscious heroines, experience brings a kind of disenchantment which leads one away from one's ego. But in Mrs Transome, disenchantment instead of leading to a Hieria or the altruism that lives outside the self, leads further into the egoistic self which distorts reality. Because she cannot communicate her problems to others, her disenchantment with herself brings no moral visions. Mrs Transome's reaction to her image demonstrates the point that I am making in this thesis that the character's world depends on what goes on in his mind. Mrs Transome is not really a hag, it is her imagination that makes her a hag. When dissatisfied with life Idione also sees herself as a hag: "As she was only frowning and looking spiteful all the day, the lake only went on giving her an uglier and uglier picture of her self, till at last she ran away from it into the hollow of her tree and sat there lonely and sad until she died."[28]

Mrs Transome's isolation throws into relief the social integration of Mrs Holt who "unlike Mrs Transome, was much disposed to reveal her troubles, and was not without a counsellor into whose ear she could pour them" (iii). Mrs Holt too is suffering. She also has a son who is a radical, who wants to change things. By not internalizing her problems, she has the benefit of the advice that leads her away from herself. But Mrs Transome's sole confidante is her maid Denner, the "clever sinner" who talks "like a French infidel," and whose morality makes even Mrs Transome shudder. She thinks in the language of lottery images. "Things don't happen because they're bad or good, else all eggs would be addled or none at all, and at the most it is but six to the dozen," Denner argues. But elsewhere in the same scene, she insists that "there's good chances and bad chances, and nobody's luck is pulled only by one string." Apropos of this logic, she advises her mistress to hide her sins under a bold face, "put a good face on it, and don't seem to be on the look-out for crows, else you'll set other people watching" (i).

By communicating her sorrows, Mrs Holt becomes the instrument of harmonious human relationships, but by hiding her sins Mrs Transome makes herself a victim of a tormenting nemesis.[29] "I have been full of fears all my life--always seeing something or other hanging over me that I couldn't bear to happen," she tells Denner whose flattering advice is incapable of assuaging the internal wounds of her mistress. Her unrelieved torture is dramatized, in the novel, from the very moment that her son enters Transome Court and she observes to herself that he is very much like Jermyn--"'What a likeness!' she said, in a loud whisper; 'yet, perhaps, no one will see it besides me'" (i)--until the revelation of the fatal truth at the end.

Esther's progress from egoism to moral consciousness and social integration, is a proof that a woman needs not waste her talents in indolent selfish regrets for what is not in her power to control. The inferences which Mrs Transome draws from a comparison of herself with Esther shows why she cannot burst out of her microcosm and proves the argument of my thesis that a character is what he thinks. Reflecting on the "fine spirit--plenty of fire and pride and wit" of Esther, Mrs Transome says, "Men like such captives, as they like horses that champ the bit and paw the ground: they feel more triumph in their mastery. What is the use of a woman's will?--if she tries, she doesn't get it, and she ceases to be loved." The latter's ability to grow out of her own egoism shows the possibilities that were and are still open to Mrs Transome. But Mrs Transome draws the wrong conclusion from what she considers to be Esther's possible fate. Esther will continue to be loved as long as she loves. Mrs Transome is not loved because she loves only herself in others. The fallacy of her conclusions about Esther is proved in the final chapters of the novel in which two of them are dramatized as disenchanted sufferers. To resolve her conflicts, Esther seeks outside help by drawing up her blinds so that the largeness of the world can help her thought. By contrast, Mrs Transome shuts herself in her narrow room, fearing the vastness of the world outside. And instead of meditating on the possible suffering she has caused to others

> . . . her heart cried out within her against the cruelty of this son. . . was it possible that he should not have been visited by some thought of the long years through which she had suffered? The memory of those came back to her now with a protest against the cruelty that had all fallen on her. . . . She was not penitent. She had borne too hard a punishment. Always the edge of calamity had fallen on her.

> Who had felt for her? She was desolate.
> God had no pity, else her son would not
> have been so hard." (L)

When eventually she looks out "into the dim night" she sees, through "the black boundary of trees and the long line of the river [that] seemed only part of the loneliness and monotony of her life, a flash of moving candle." The flash comes, of course, from Esther's open doors. It is a symbol of the spiritual force associated with the love that separates her from Esther. She opens her door gently, "but when she had reached Esther's she hesitated. She had never yet in her life asked for compassion--had never thrown herself in faith on an unproffered love." Her isolation is again shown to be another aspect of her narcissism. But Esther does come to her and they "turned hand in hand into the room, and sat down together on a sofa at the foot of the bed. . . A passionate desire to soothe this suffering woman came over her. She clung round her again, and kissed her poor quivering lips and eyelids, and laid her young cheek against the pale and haggard one. . . . As Mrs Transome felt that soft clinging, she said 'God has some pity on me.'"

For the first time she recognizes her helplessness and the joy that can come from simple human affections. Esther's subsequent question, "O why didn't you call me before?" strikes at the heart of her problem. She is so locked up in her microcosm that she cannot avail herself of the healing salve that lies in the moral universe that surrounds her. Although she does not undergo moral regeneration, she seems to have realized that life is not a lottery in which she is always a winner and that there are certain things that she can neither arrange nor choose. Esther introduces in her life a ray of hope that comes from the "mutual influence of dissimilar natures." By this hope, she is reintegrated into the society in which the reform efforts of Felix and Esther will be meaningful.

Society

Like the characters, North Loamshire does not want its "private life" to be "determined by a wider public life" (iii).[30] It opposes industry and other innovations on the ground that "new doings were usually for the advantage of new people" (iii). It wants to be as isolated as the little hamlet which seems to the coachman Sampson "to lie away from everything but its own patch of earth and sky, . . . away from all intercourse except that of tramps," (Introduction). The grocer Mr Nuttwood's statement that "I follow no new lights" (xiii) typifies the thinking of North Loamshire before the Reform Bill. In spite of itself, however, North Loamshire fails to keep out of "the political agitation that swept the country" (iii).

Politics forces together the isolated microcosms scattered all over North Loamshire. For the first time, Magna Treby, Little Treby, and Sproxton share a common problem. When Esther wonders why Jermyn, who never before takes notice of her, suddenly begins to recognize her, Felix replies, "Politics, of course. . . . An election is coming. . ." (v). The riot and the subsequent trial of Felix are technical devices to force North Loamshire into social consciousness. The voluntary gathering of the various classes of people at the Loamshire Hall for the purpose of drawing a petition on behalf of Felix is a symbolic fusing of the isolated microcosms of Loamshire to form a macrocosm. It represents a moral growth which justifies Felixes and Esther's reform ideas.

The conflict of microcosms in Felix Holt prove the major assumption of my thesis that all characters in George Eliot's fictional world are egocentric. Felix, Esther, Harold, Mrs Transome, and others begin life as egoists, but through suffering they acquire experience. Esther and Felix, because of the way they think, reach moral consciousness. Mrs Transome and Harold, also because of their thoughts, are only partially regenerated. Through the influence of the Esthers and Felixs the community becomes morally and socially integrated.

Chapter VII

Middlemarch

In Middlemarch the treatment of egoism becomes much more sophisticated. The reader is confronted with more complex characters who, on the surface, are not preoccupied with selfish interests, but with altruistic ideas that purport to improve the lots of mankind in general. Dorothea, Casaubon, Lydgate, and Bulstrode each have theories for the wellbeing of society or for the advancement of human knowledge. To develop these characters to their full potentials, George Eliot does not invent a new technique, but increases the number of relations to involve characters in more actions. The result is a fascinating panoramic presentation[1] of apparently isolated little worlds as they each struggle for the monopoly of the larger world that envelops their microcosms.

The panoramic structure of the work frightened many a contemporary critic who felt that Middlemarch was a threat to traditional concepts of unity.[2] But recent critics, especially David Carroll and Barbara Hardy, have a tendency to over-emphasize the importance of the characters' "theories" in which they enthusiastically locate unifying analogies.[3] But it appears to me that the clashing of microcosms founded on ego-centric theories that are divorced from emotion is much more structurally important in Middlemarch than the analogous relationships of erroneous theories.[4] I stress this point not only because of its relevance to the subject of my thesis, but also because its application to Middlemarch has not been satisfactorily demonstrated before. Because of human frailties and be-

because man is necessarily limited in knowledge, George Eliot does not take kindly to ambitious theories that are projected as panacea for all human problems.[5] In this essay, I hope to show that theories serve in Middlemarch as the basis for isolating characters in microcosms from which their egoisms may be respectively analyzed and studied. By means of a theory a character creates a little world for himself. This microcosm first isolates him from the macrocosm that surrounds him and then brings him into conflict with other microcosms.

Dorothea Brooke and Edward Casaubon

Dorothea's mind, we are told, "was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects" (i).[6] Having theorised that she is created for a great purpose, she begins to look at people and things as the means for attaining the goal. Objects that do not fit into her conception of the world are contemptuously rejected. Pre-occupation with the fripperies of feminine fashion, when viewed through the alembic of this great ideal, is nothing but "an occupation for Bedlam," since "she could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in guimp and artificial protrusions of drapery." Marriage ought to be a dedication to the great cause. "She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure." Dorothea's conception of the world is theoretic because it is derived from a belief that is based on undigested knowledge garnered from textbooks.

The mature reader does not derive "belief" from the past, but the "inspiration" which enables one "to shape more definitely ideas which had previously dwelt as dim Ahnungen" in one's mind.[7] Such inspiration, for George Eliot, helps one to understand and to interpret one's own time much more correctly;[8] it must not become a substitute for the actual experience of living. Dorothea's attempt to formulate a complete rule of life from an abstract theory only serves to cut her off from the actual experience of living.[9] Consequently, she becomes intellectually isolated from the life that surrounds her. However, she has an emotional life which is not influenced by her theories and which strives for active relationship with flesh and blood. Her attempts to superimpose her intellectual life on her emotional nature causes an embarrassing psychological division between her mind and heart. Finding herself isolated from one half of herself and from society, she withdraws into her ego, and becomes, in spite of her altruistic aims, selfish in her efforts to fulfil herself. A good example of how her split personality drives her into selfishness is her psychological perplexity about her mother's gems. When suddenly she finds herself admiring gems in spite of her theoretical belief that gems are undesirable feminine fripperies, she does not imagine that something may be wrong with her theories, but instead she blames the "miserable men" who "find such things, and work at them, and sell them" (i). The perfect egoist, in George Eliot, does not accept responsibility for a fault. But when Celia presses Dorothea into acknowledging her error, she refuses to accept the valid claims of her emotional life, which she has come to regard as morally detestable: "'Perhaps,' she said rather haughtily, 'I cannot tell to what level I may sink.'" Pride is the food that nourishes egoism; it gives it its exclusive quality.

Equally repulsive to Dorothea is anyone who does not fit into her scheme of things or anyone who is intellectually inferior to Milton or Pascal. She sees, for instance, Sir James Chettam as a common sort of man who may make a tolerable husband to Celia, but too ordinary to fit into her microcosm. And having decided beforehand where the man should fit in, she is offended that, instead of paying attention to Celia to whom she has psychologically assigned him, he should dare to court her, who knows Pascal and Milton. However, she is willing to tolerate him when he shows interest in her plans to modernize the tenants' cottages. But the interest is based on the assumption that he can be a useful material, a means to an end, but not part of the end. The intellectual gap that exists between them, she thinks, is a guarantee that their worlds will never come together. When, however, she learns that Sir James's interest in her cottages cannot be separated from his affections for her, she is scandalized: "The revulsion was so strong and painful in Dorothea's mind that the tears welled up and flowed abundantly. All her dear plans were embittered, and she thought with disgust of Sir James's conceiving that she recognized him as her lover" (iv). Her anger originates in the haughtiness of her egoism. But Celia's subsequent reprimand underscores the point that her sister's one-sided view of life has blinded her vision. Dorothea is short-sighted and ought to see things that are close by, but it is the irony in which her theory of life places her that she cannot see clearly what is closest to her. "You always see what nobody else sees," says Celia, "Yet you never see what is quite plain." This is an important diagnosis. Since inference is based on similarity, one can better understand what is far off and obscure by a close analysis of the near and obvious. Dorothea's attempts to become far-sighted when she is short-sighted is a selfish superimposition of her will on her nature. The consequence is that she acquires a new sight with which she sees things only subjectively, from her mind's eye. But her newly acquired sight, like Don Quixote's, distorts reality.[10]

By constantly seeing things subjectively, from the assumptions of her narrow microcosm, she acquires the mental habits of a thorough egoist. As B.J. Paris rightly puts it, "her mental process corresponded to the way in which, according to Feuerbach, man creates his image of God out of the qualities and yearnings of his own nature."[11] Dorothea subsequently creates Casaubon out of the yearnings of her own mind. Upon seeing him for the first time, she thinks that "his deep eye-sockets made him resemble the portrait of Locke" (ii). From mere resemblance he is transformed, in the laboratory of her mind, into a kind of resurrected Locke, who shares in her intellectual yearnings: "Here was a man who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion; nay who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge: a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed." Nothing, of course, can be more ironic that this vision of Casaubon as a great-souled man in whom her dreams will be actualized. But "Dorothea by this time," says the narrator, looking over her shoulder, "had looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr Casaubon's mind, seeing reflected there in vague labyrinthine extension every quality she herself brought" (iii). The touchstone of egoism is to see constantly one's self in others. Dorothea blurs her own vision by seeing herself in Casaubon. After this initial meeting with her Locke, she becomes convinced that "He thinks with me . . . or rather, he thinks a whole world of which my thought is but a poor twopenny mirror. And his feeling too, his whole experience--what a lake compared with my little pool!"

But "Mr Casaubon, too, was the centre of his own world." He too thinks that "others were providentially made for him," and considers "them in the light of their fitness for the author of a 'Key to all Mythologies'" (x). He explains to Dorothea that the great object of his life is to show "that all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed." Like Dorothea's, this is also a theoretical construction that can only be tested by its relationship to life. Whether his theory is right or wrong is irrelevant. From his classical studies, he ought to derive the inspiration that will enable him to interpret his own time much more correctly, that will enable him to relate effectively with his fellow men. But he robs himself of the fruits of knowledge by confusing his selfish needs with the reward of knowledge. He is not interested in knowledge, but in confounding his enemies: "to convince Carp of his mistake, so that he would have to eat his own words with a good deal of indigestion, would be an agreeable accident of triumphant authorship" (xlii). Knowledge can only mediate between the individual and the moral universe when it inspires altruistic feelings. Casaubon's feeling is expended not on his subject but on vague suspicions of imagined enemies. Because of his suspicions, he is isolated in a narrow microcosm. He has neither faith in humanity nor in his own abilities, and to lose faith is tantamount to losing the emotional force from which ideas originate.[12] The central conflict of his life is that between his half-hearted effort to complete a work on which his fame depends and his emotional detachment from the work.[13] Deprived of emotional life, he becomes a mere worm crawling among damp books hidden in dark labyrinthine caves. His diction becomes lifeless and inflated. Instead of speaking from the depth of his soul, he speaks from the pages of books, and his second-hand metaphors have the tendency of interposing secondary objects between him and his purpose.[14]

Usually, in George Eliot's novels, the egoist is permitted to grow gradually out of his microcosm through vital contacts with a wider, outside world. But in Middlemarch, the egoists are married off early, at the beginning of the novel, without the vital experience which will help them to modify their selfish assumptions. The result is intensified ironic conflict. The matching of Casaubon with Dorothea is a conscious dramatization of the tragedy that is inevitable when microcosms clash. The grand irony of the situation is that neither character means harm to the other. They are each well-meaning egoists. Dorothea worhips herself in Casaubon and vice versa.

At their first meeting, Casaubon tells Dorothea that "I feed too much on the inward sources; I live too much with the dead. My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes" (ii). For Casaubon the intellectual life has no practical use whatsoever, whereas for Dorothea it is a means whereby the conditions of the suffering poor can be bettered. But Dorothea, whose ability for perception is beclouded by the egoistic assumption that every scholar shares in her concern with a knowledge that will be immediately useful, fails to see that Casaubon's preoccupation with the dead cannot be reconciled with her aims. Consequently, instead of seeing the antiquary as her opposite, she sees his interests as coinciding with hers: "To reconstruct a past world, doubtless with a view to the highest purposes of truth--what a work to be in any way present at, to assist in, though only as a lamp-holder!" But the great purpose she thinks of exists only in her imagination.

As we have seen, Casaubon is concerned to vindicate himself and to confound his enemies rather than to demonstrate the truth of his theory. In fact he shies away from questions which probe the motives for his great key: "We must not inquire too curiously into motives," he insists, because "they are apt to become feeble in the utterance: the aroma is mixed with the grosser air. We must keep the germinating grain away from the light" (ii). The unique quality of his egoism is that it indulges in self-deceit by the use of bogus vocabulary. After this speech, which shows that the speaker's world shuns the searching light of knowledge, Dorothea can still colour "with pleasure" and "look up gratefully to the speaker." "Here was a man," she says to herself, "who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion; nay, who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge: a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed!" She persuades herself that Casaubon's knowledge will enlighten her blurred vision and thus help her to formulate a rule of conduct which will guide her life. And to penetrate this great knowledge she needs at least a rudimentary knowledge of Latin and Greek:

> Those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly. As it was, she constantly doubted her own conclusions, because she felt her own ignorance: how could she be confident that one-roomed cottages were not for the glory of God, when men who knew the

> classics appeared to conciliate indifference to the cottages with zeal for the glory? Perhaps even Hebrew might be necessary--at least the alphabet and a few roots--in order to arrive at the core of things, and judge soundly of the social duties of the Christian. (vii)

This thought is Dorothea's preparation for marriage. It is analytic of her intellectual world--a world from which her emotional life is expelled. On the other hand her illusions about Casaubon anticipate the conflict which is to paralyze their marriage. W.J. Harvey appropriately notes that "Casaubon's intellectual life has nothing at all to do with either his religious life--which is even more non-existent than Mr Cadwallader's--or with his position in society." He goes on to point out that it is "this divorce between the different aspects of the man that gives a particular ironic weight to the futility of Dorothea's 'eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own' life and doctrine into strict connection with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions'" (x).[15]

While Dorothea is thus recreating Casaubon in her own image, Casaubon is also shaping her in his own image. He fancies Dorothea a providential reward for his scholarly exertions. She is "a modest young lady, with the purely appreciative, unambitious abilities of her sex," and she "is sure to think her husband's mind powerful" (xxix). As a recreational object, she is to provide the uncritical applause which archdeacon Carp and the rest of the world deny him.

Dorothea's and Casaubon's honeymoon in Rome is central to the psychological conception of the characters. It tests the validity of the assumptions on which their respective microcosms are founded. Seen through the alembic of Dorothea's world, in which art and learning are subordinated to utiliarian ends, Rome is nothing but a dead city "where the past of a whole hemisphere seems moving in funeral procession with strange ancestral images and trophies gathered from afar" (xx). Rome is singularly "unintelligible" to her because her aesthetic taste is determined by motives which have no reference to the gaudy adornments of Rome. Its "ruins and basilicas, palaces and colossi" seem to her to be "set in the midst of a sordid present where all that was living and warm-blooded seemed sunk in the deep degeneracy of a superstition divorced from reverence." She refuses to accept the world of Rome because it is foreign to hers:

> Its long vistas of white forms whose marble eyes seemed to hold the monotonous light of an alien world; all this vast wreck of ambitious ideals, sensuous and spiritual, mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation, at first jarred her as with an electric shock, and then urged themselves on her with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion.

Dorothea's sensibilities are as fragmented as her view of Rome. Her efforts to superimpose her intellectual life on her feelings force her to see things with her mind's eyes only. But for a harmonious relationship to exist between the mind and an external object, the mind must be coordinated with the heart. She simply cannot see things as they really are. It is significant that the "red drapery which was being hung for Christmas" appears to her to be "spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina." The imagery supports the view that it is her subjective view of life that makes Rome unintelligible to her. Art, like religion, functions in George Eliot as a mediator between a character and the moral universe that surrounds him. However, art may only play this role when aesthetic appreciation is objective, that is, when the observer's ego is sufficiently detached from the art work to permit a free flow of the emotions.[16]

To show Dorothea how art can function to liberate her from her Idione, George Eliot creates Will Ladislaw, a dilettante artist who has neither a settled idea on any subject nor a self-centred theory of life to bring with him to Rome. Ladislaw is essential, not necessarily as Casaubon's foil or sex rival,[17] but as Dorothea's emotional side which she is so anxious to suppress. Unlike Dorothea, he comes to Rome with a mind free from any preconceived concept of what the city ought to be. He simply allows his mind to be wrought on by artistic objects. He tells Dorothea that "I enjoy the art of all sorts here immensely" (xxi). Significantly, he cannot, like Dorothea, attempt an evaluation of his enjoyment of art because "if I could pick my enjoyment to pieces I should find it made up of many different threads." One enjoys art synthetically, through a unity of the whole self, not analytically through the mind. He will not become a professional artist because he does not like to get into the "way of looking at the world entirely from the studio point of view." Again he is hinting at Dorothea's main problem--seeing the world from the studio of her microcosm. Her view of Rome, coloured, as it is, by an intellectual analysis of her personal lot can only lead from disappointment to the sorrow that springs from starved emotions. Her sorrows are shown to derive from her dissociated sensibilities:

> With all her yearning to know what was afar from her and to be widely benignant, she had ardour enough for what was near, to have kissed Mr Casaubon's coat-sleeve, or to have caressed his shoe-latchet, if he would have made any other sign of acceptance than pronouncing her, with his unfailing propriety, to be of a most affectionate and truly feminine nature, indicating at the same time by politely reaching a chair for her that he regarded these manifestations as rather crude and startling. (xx)

Dorpthea's affair can only take a new turn when she learns to respect her own feelings. But she stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the claims of her emotional life and is "humiliated to find herself a mere victim of feeling," as if she could know nothing except through that medium." With her old pride reasserting itself, she can only surrender herself again to "visions of more complete renunciation, transforming all hard conditions into duty."

But Casaubon is also dissatisfied with his achievements in Rome. His emotional and intellectual impotence become more and more obvious as his wife begins to make uncomfortable claims on his meagre reserves of passion and knowledge: "Dorothea not only distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither" (xx). Casaubon has, in fact, done nothing to satisfy the intellectual promise which has attracted Dorothea to him. His long acquaintance with museums and libraries has, instead of improving his knowledge, shrunken "such capacity of thought and feeling as had ever been stimulated in him by the general life of mankind" into a kind of "dried preparation, a lifeless embalment of knowledge" (xx). Because of the selfish critical attitude of his mind he, like Dorothea, cannot appreciate art disinterestedly. He seems to be seeing Rome vicariously through the impressions of others. He tells Dorothea that Farnesina "contains celebrated frescoes designed or painted by Raphael, which most persons think it worthwhile to visit." "But do you care about them?" asks Dorothea. "They are, I believe, highly esteemed. Some of them represent the fable of Cupid and Psyche, which is probably the romantic invention of a literary period, and cannot, I think, be reckoned as a genuine mythical product." The narrator attributes his mental impotence to that critical habit of his mind, which, as we have seen, originates in his egocentricity:

> Poor Mr Casaubon himself was lost among small closets and winding stairs, and in an agitated dimness about the Cabeiri or in an exposure of other mythologists' ill-considered parallels, easily lost sight of any purpose which had prompted him to these labours. With his taper stuck before him he forgot the absence of windows, and in bitter manuscript remarks on other men's notions about the solar deities, he had become indifferent to the sunlight. (xx)

His morbid dread of criticism, which ironically originates in an egocentred fault-finding attitude towards others, becomes a haunting nemesis that turns his creative energy into ghostly fears and suspicions. Consequently, he comes to distrust everyone, and shrinks further and further into his microcosm. The withdrawal into himself precipitates the major crisis of his life.

Disappointed with her husband because he has not satisfied the assumptions which she has made for him, Dorothea innocently decides to probe Mr Casaubon's hidden world in order to ascertain what she is really to expect. But her husband, who is always nervously on guard against any inquiry which may show his mental power in a bad light, becomes suspicious and retires quickly into his ego:

> "I hope you are thoroughly satisfied with our stay--I mean, with the result so far as your studies are concerned," said Dorothea, trying to keep her mind fixed on what most affected her husband.
>
> "Yes", said Mr Casaubon, with the peculiar pitch of voice which makes the word half a negative. "I have been led farther than I had foreseen, and various subjects for annotation have presented themselves which, though I have no direct need of them, I could not pretermit. The task, notwithstanding the assistance of my amanuensis has been somewhat laborious one, but your society has happily prevented me from that too continuous prosecution of thought beyond the hours of study which has been the snare of my solitary life."
>
> "I am very glad that my presence has made any difference to you," said Dorothea, who had a vivid memory of evenings in which she has supposed that Mr Casaubon's mind had gone too deep during the day to be able to get to the surface again. I fear there was a little temper in her reply. "I hope when we get to Lowick, I shall be more useful to you and be able to enter a little more into what interests you."
>
> "Doubtless, my dear," said Mr Casaubon, with a slight bow. "The notes I have here made will want sifting, and you can, if you please, extract them under my direction."
>
> "And all your notes," said Dorothea, whose heart had already burned within her on this subject, so that now she could not help speaking with her tongue. "All those rows of volumes--will you not now do what you used to speak of? --will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use, and begin to write the book which will make your vast knowledge useful to the world? I will write to your dictation, or I will copy and extract what you tell me: I can be of no other use." Dorothea, in a most unaccountable, darkly-feminine manner, ended with a slight sob and eyes full of tears. (xx)

The logic of their separate-lives-in-union has prepared them for this drama. The narrator, very relevantly, points out that their misery comes from their living in separate worlds. "She was as blind to his inward troubles as he to hers: she had not yet listened patiently to his heart-beats, but only felt that her own was beating violently." For both the moment is a crucial one. Mr Casaubon has the option either to burst out of his microcosm and confess his doubts to his wife or to persist in the secretiveness so fatal to his wellbeing. But he opts for the latter. "For the first time since Dorothea had known him, Mr Casaubon's face had a quick angry flush upon it." "My love," he said, with irritation reined in by propriety, "you may rely upon me for knowing the times and the seasons, adapted to the different stages of a work which is not to be measured by the facile conjectures of ignorant onlookers. . . ." Unwittingly his wife has touched his most vulnerable spot; instead of being an uncritical applauder, she has become "a personification of that shallow world which surrounds the ill-appreciated or desponding author." But Dorothea is rather too conscious of the claims of her own microcosm to penetrate the feelings of her wounded husband. She "was indignant in her turn. Had she not been repressing everything in herself except the desire to enter into some fellowship with her husband's chief interests?" She retorts angrily: "My judgment was a very superficial one--such as I am capable of forming," she answered, with a prompt resentment, that needed no rehearsal. "You showed me the rows of note-books--you have often spoken of them--you have often said that they wanted digesting. But I never heard you speak of the writing that is to be published."

The scene supports my contention in this thesis that what happens to characters, in George Eliot, depends to a large extent on what goes on in their minds. However, the quarrel reveals to both man and wife that they have been living on false assumptions. Dorothea's hope to assist in a great intellectual labour receives its first jolt which to her is "like a catastrophe, changing all prospects." But to Casaubon the union with Dorothea is now seen as a cruel "subjection" that he has not imagined before marriage.

Dorothea is weeping in her isolated loneliness when Will Ladislaw drops in to tell her that her husband's theory of a Key to all Mythologies is an exploded myth. This is an alarming revelation. But Dorothea does not, like Rosamond Lydgate, recede into her Idione to revel in her sorrows, but instead her mind grows outwards to meet her husband's. This sharing of sympathy is the first symptom of moral growth. She is already learning from experience. It is "the first stirring of a pitying tenderness fed by the realities" of another person's lot "and not by her own dreams"(xxi). The more permanent effect of this partial liberation from her microcosm is that she is now able to enter into a disinterested communion with her fellow human beings. She is becoming aware of possibilities that lie beyond her thoughts. Rome has been a training ground:

> We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling--an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects--that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference. (xxi)

Many critics agree that this passage is central to George Eliot's psychological conception of the novel. It relates egoism to its source in "divided sensibilities,"[18] and shows that Dorothea's disintegrated sensibilities, symbolized in the "stupendous fragmentariness" of Rome, are at last coalescing to give her life the unified moral pattern,[19] that is eventually to modulate her to her Hieria. The generalized statement that all of us are "born in moral stupidity. . ."[20] not only tends to suggest that moral progress is necessarily evolutionary in nature, but appears also to imply the condemnation of those like Casaubon, Rosamond, and Bulstrode, who never grow out of their microcosms. It is unfortunate that Casaubon does not recognize that Dorothea also has an equivalent "centre of self."

Regeneration involves a long difficult journey along a road that is full of pitfalls. The regenerating character often finds herself relapsing into her old self. Upon return to Lowick, Dorothea is disenchanted, because, in spite of the gains she has made in Italy, she cannot easily forget the past; she views Lowick, as she has viewed Rome, through the coloured mirror of her personal lot:

> The distant flat shrank in uniform whiteness and low-hanging uniformity of cloud. The very furniture in the room seemed to have shrunk since she saw it before: the stag in the tapestry looked more like a ghost in his ghostly blue-green world; the volumes of polite literature in the bookcase looked more like immovable imitations of books. The bright fire of dry oak-boughs burning on the dogs seemed an incongruous renewal of life and glow--like the figure of Dorothea herself as she entered carrying the red-leather cases containing the cameos of Celia. (xxviii)

Neither the furniture nor the clouds have changed their natural aspects; what has changed is the furniture of Dorothea's mind. Before going on her honeymoon, Lowick had appeared to her as an integral part of her microcosm, as a place where she would assist in a task that is vital to the survival of mankind. But Rome has shattered her fond dreams. Her disenchantment derives intensity from the contrast which her present reality makes with her departing illusions:

> In the first minutes when Dorothea looked out she felt nothing but the dreary oppression; then came a keen remembrance, and turning away from the window she walked round the room. The ideas and hopes which were living in her mind when she first saw this room nearly three months before were present now only as memories; she judged them as we judge transient and departed things. All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious

> faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her. Each remembered thing in the room was disenchanted, was deadened as an unlit transparency,. . . (xxviii)

Her present, seen through the reflected image of the past, appears oppressively flippant. Her suffering is all the more painful because she has neither the experience nor a mentor that will help her to understand herself. In despair she seeks companionship in the image of Casaubon's aunt Julia. Like her, Julia "had made [an] unfortunate marriage." She finds a relationship between her history and the dead woman's whose face has suddenly come alive to her wounded mind, and she "felt a new companionship with it, as if it had an ear for her and could see how she was looking at it. Here was a woman who had known some difficulty about marriage." For George Eliot, those near to us are the means by which we understand and interpret life. To see one's sorrow as not really unique is an important step in the egoist's progress towards moral regeneration. The companionship in Julia's sorrows leads her to remember her husband's own heartache. And for her, to remember is to pity: "Oh, it was cruel to speak so!" she blames herself. "How sad--how dreadful." With these regretful thoughts, she rushes to meet her husband.

Since the disagreeable scene in Rome, Casaubon has receded further into his ego. He has become more "distrustful of everybody's feeling towards him, especially as a husband." In spite of Dorothea's overtures, he is unwilling to share his world with her; in fact, as was demonstrated earlier, he hides his doubts even from his conscious self. "All through his life Mr Casaubon had been trying not to admit even to himself the inward sores of self-doubt and jealousy. And on the most delicate of all personal subjects, the habit of proud suspicious reticence told doubly" (xxxvii). He has become rather very irritable and suspects Dorothea of carrying out a secret correspondence with his nephew Ladislaw. He has made no efforts to penetrate his wife's world. His suspicions serve only to widen the emotional distance that already separates him from his wife. Because of the agitations that arise from his suspicious nature he suffers a heart-attack. Again it is Dorothea's spirit which yearns after his. In her self-effacing manner, she feels that the agitation caused by her anger is responsible for the sudden attack of her husband's illness. In the surge of emotion which follows her subsequent agitation, she identifies herself wholly with Casaubon's world: "Think what I can do," she tells Lydgate, weeping. "He has been labouring all his life and looking forward. He minds about nothing else. And I mind about nothing else" (xxx). But the physician appropriately diagnoses his sickness as the "affection of the heart." His disease arises from that contentious relationship with the world which is the result of his suspicious jealousy over the "Key to all Mythologies." His suspicions increase in proportion as his energy for work on the great book decreases, and in the laboratory of his mind, every good work, every kind act is converted into a heart-corroding poison. Dorothea's faithfulness becomes "a suppressed rebellion" and "her gentle answers had an irritating cautiousness in them." He fears "the sway that might be given to her ardent mind in its judgments and the future possibilities to which these might lead her" (xlii). He persudades himself that Will Ladislaw is capable "of any design which could fascinate temper and an undisciplined impulsiveness." Out of selfish fears grows the poisonous idea that Ladislaw might want to marry his wife after his death and prevent her from completing the great work which is to survive his memory. To undermine what he believes to be his nephew's plot, he adds a codicil to his Will which disinherits Dorothea if she marries Ladislaw. He never emancipates himself from his microcosm. His dying request, that his wife should complete his work, is an attempt to extend his world beyond the grave. In rejecting her husband's "cold grasp" (L) on her life, Dorothea asks, "Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" (liv) By this rejection, Dorothea liberates herself from the delusions which have crippled Casaubon's life.

Dorothea, however, cannot live without a sense of purpose. She must find a theory of life, even if a false one, to cling to. Duty to her husband has, in fact, given her life a sort of anchor, a faith that has saved her from sinking into her microcosm, and its loss creates a yawning vacuum. She gropes after a new idea on which to reconstruct her shattered microcosm, and she soon locates one in a utopic dream of founding a colony for the oppressed and the poor: "I shall never marry again," she placidly tells Celia. "Not anybody at all. I have delightful plans. I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well. I should know every one of the people and be their friend" (lv). This new utopia, like her intellectual yearning for a knowledge that will better the lot of humanity, is based on a concept which ignores her emotional nature and on perfect ignorance of the nature of society. It is another unconscious effort to make herself the centre of life. But in spite of herself, she has gained in experience and can never be her old self again. After the death of Casaubon she tells Will Ladislaw that "I was very fond of doing as I like, but I have almost given it up" (liv). Consciousness of the true self is an essential turning point in the life of the egoist. Such knowledge evolves from experience and is used to liberate one from one's Idionic microcosm.[21] Her subsequent interview with Lydgate underscores her continued struggles to develop a significant moral pattern from the ashes of her shattered world. She tells the physician that "you meant to lead a higher life than the common, and to find better ways. . . . There is no sorrow I have thought more about than that--to love what is great, and try to reach it, and yet to fail" (lxxvi). She is trying to understand herself through the misfortunes of Lydgate. But when she insists that Lydgate can still "win a great fame like the Louis and the Laennec I have heard you speak of," provided he permits her to finance the new hospital and to work to get the public change its opinion about him she is returning to the dreams which made her marry Casaubon. In spite of her gains in knowledge, Dorothea still believes that others think with her. But it is the affectionate side of her nature which has won the physician's confidence. He tells her that his conjugal troubles have sapped his energy for work. Dorothea, who always has a ready sympathy for the suffering, immediately undertakes to mediate between the man and his wife.

She does not find Mrs Lydgate in a state of anxious misery as she has imagined; instead she finds her in a compromising tête-à-tête with Will Ladislaw. She is struck "motionless, without self-possession enough to speak" (lxxvii). The new feeling is a complete surprise and she flies from the scene in a state of agitation. When secured in the privacy of her own home, she abandons herself to grief. For the first time, she acknowledges to herself that she can be a victim of feeling, that she is in love with Ladislaw, and that she is jealous of Rosamond:

> She locked her door, and turning away from it towards the vacant room she pressed her hands hard on the top of her head, and moaned out--
> "Oh, I did love him!. . ."
> Here, with the nearness of an answering smile, here within the vibrating bond of mutual speech was the bright creature whom she had trusted--who had come to her like the spirit of morning visiting the dim vault where she sat as the bride of a worn-out life; and now, with a full consciousness which had never awakened before, she stretched out her arms towards him and cried with bitter cries that their nearness was a parting vision: she discovered her passion to herself in the unshrinking utterance of despair. (lxxx)

The significance of these reflections cannot be overestimated. It shows that the heroine is in a major crisis. She is disenchanted because her moral growth has been dependent on an unconscious attachment to Ladislaw. And just as she has created Casaubon out of her intellectual cogitations, she has fashioned Ladislaw from her emotional yearnings. In the depth of her memory she has seen him as a property reserved for her and is therefore shocked to discover that he has a self which does not conform to her wishes.

But her love for Ladislaw is meaningful only in the sense that it functions to reconcile her divided sensibilities. If, however, love is to function as a moral agent it must be independent of personal advantages and attachments, that is, it must be liberated from the Idione. It is the irony of Dorothea's situation that her love for Ladislaw can become objective only if she renouces any claims that the love makes for her, because renunciation is morally useful if the renounced object is worthwhile. To renounce her claims on the affections of Ladislaw, Dorothea must abandon her old self--"crucify the flesh" that attaches her to her microcosm.[22]

Dorothea's intellectual life helps her to understand and to interpret the claims of love in relationship to the claims of duty. What makes her love so superior, for instance to Rosamond's, is that it is informed by the intellect. It is not in her nature, we are told, "to sit in the narrow cell of her calamity, in the besotted misery of a consciousness that only sees another's lot as an accident of its own." As we have shown earlier, Dorothea has a capacity for the self-sacrifice needed to rescue her from her Idione. In the midst of her impassioned disenchantment, she can still reflect that she has been selfish in her love, and that she can still make the lives of Ladislaw, Rosamond, and Lydgate meaningful to them: "'Was she alone in that scene? Was it her event only?' She forced herself to think of it as bound up with another woman's life--a woman towards whom she had set out with a longing to carry some clearness and comfort into her beclouded youth." In this altruistic analysis of her situation, she is trying to transcend her ego. But she cannot wholly emancipate herself without the assistance of the knowledge she has gained from former experience:

> All the active thought with which she had before been representing to herself the trials of Lydgate's lot, and this young marriage union which, like her own, seemed to have its hidden as well as evident troubles --all this vivid sympathetic experience returned to her now as a power: it asserted itself as acquired knowledge asserts itself and will not let us see as we saw in the day of our ignorance.

She has acquired a new moral vision to assist her progress:

> The objects of her rescue were not to be sought out by her fancy: they were chosen for her. She yearned towards the perfect Right, that it might make a throne within her, and rule her errant will. "What should I do--how should I act now, this very day, if I could clutch my own pain, and compel it to silence, and think of those three?" 23

This is a fitting turning point in her moral journey. With the cry, "How shall I act now?" she leaps over her egoism. The question implies a disinterested search for her Hieria; it is a resignation to an authority outside herself. She is no longer wishing to assert herself; she craves outside help and the elements of nature seem to be in accord with her mind: "It had taken long for her to come to that question, and there was light piercing into the room." The light is a sign that illuminates the road to her Hieria:

> She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving--perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining. (lxxx)[24]

Here is a graphic mapping of the mind of a character in the process of passing from the restrictive shell of its Idione to its expansive Hieria. It is one of the numerous scenes in which transformation is dramatized to involve the reader in the psychological process of moral change. After the scene, Dorothea is no longer in doubt as to what to do. She consciously recreates her conversion symbolically by casting off her mourning suit--now the symbol of her isolation and selfishness--and putting on bright dresses that will make her one with the masses that throng the streets, going about the business of life: "She took off the clothes which seemed to have some of the weariness of a hard-watching in them" and asks her maid "to bring me my new dress; and most likely I shall want my new bonnet today." She wants her renunciation to be a triumph over her private sorrow; she means to lead an active life although she has buried her private joy in renouncing her love for Ladislaw.

But she learns from Rosamond herself that she has been wrong about Ladislaw, who has all along been in love with her and not Rosamond. Although she no longer needs to sacrifice her private affections for duty, she has shown that her love can be independent of her ego. She cannot withdraw into her microcosm again, because she has become internally reoriented to her reality--by reuniting her intellect and affections--without abandoning her cherished ideals. "If I love him too much," she reflects, "it is because he has been used so ill" (lxxxiii). And in a conversation with Ladislaw on the day of their engagement, she says that it is "a wrong thing for you to say, that you would have had nothing to try for. If we had lost our own chief good, other people's good would remain; and that is worth trying for."[25] This is a doctrine which only the perfect Hieria can hold. She has finally come to the conclusion that the essence of life is not comprehended by self-centred theories but simply by feeling for others. Soon after the speech she becomes engaged to her lover.

There are critics who think that Dorothea's marriage with Ladislaw is a degradation, because the dilettante artist is an unfitting suitor.[26] But the logic of their lives make the union necessary. Ladislaw is not the great scholar that Dorothea's mind yearns for, but he is the incarnation of a sensuous enjoyment of life that will help to rehabilitate the heroine's alienated emotional life. More importantly, however, he has been her mentor, through whom she has been able to emerge from her microcosm. It is not unusual, in George Eliot, for the heroine to fall in love with her mentor. This is because the mentor is the only one who can penetrate her whole being. Ladislaw is Dorothea's only hope for fulfilling her dreams, because he understands her fully. For George Eliot, a union formed in "the maturity of thought and feeling and grounded only on inherent fitness and mutual attraction," should bring the woman "into more intelligent sympathy with men" and so "heighten and complicate" her share in the political and social drama.[27] The "perfect freedom" with which Dorothea and Ladislaw "follow and declare their own impressions"[28] in all things is the inspiration that Dorothea needs for her great task of diffusing the light of human goodness around those close to her. This task of diffusing knowledge in a quiet unobtrusive manner is for George Eliot the highest of all callings,[29] and Dorothea's discovery of her vocation is a logical outcome of her experience with the actual facts of life.

Dorothea's moral growth illustrates the main point of this thesis. She starts life as an Idione isolated in a narrow microcosm, but through suffering and regeneration, she reaches her Hieria and is reintegrated into the moral world.

Lydgate and Rosamond

The story of Lydgate and Rosamond is a continuation of the series of experiments in which George Eliot attempts to demonstrate that the problems of life are much too complex to be comprehended in terms of inflexible theories or formulations. In a very limited sense, the Lydgate-Rosamond drama repeats that of Dorothea-Casaubon.[30] Lydgate's theoretical approach to life isolates him in a narrow microcosm, and brings him into conflict with the ego-centric Rosamond who helps to ruin his career. The Lydgate-Rosamond worlds differ from those of Casaubon-Dorothea in proportion as the minds of the characters differ.

Lydgate wants to explain all life scientifically. His microcosm is that in which he is adored for his scientific achievements only. He treats with contempt those who do not share in his ambitions. He haughtily hopes to "have nothing to do with clerical disputes" (xiii) because "the path" he has chosen "is to work well in my profession." To be concerned with one's profession only is the essence of egoism. Because of the way he reasons, Lydgate fails to acquire the knowledge which will enable him to understand himself as he understands science. He does not see that his arrogant nature militates against his scientific outlook.

His egoism originates in that arrogant, presuming, irrational side of him that the narrator calls his "spots of commonness," and which force him to cling to notions that ordinarily will be repugnant to his scientific outlook. For example, he consciously rejects pride of birth and titles in order to devote himself totally to medicine. But somehow he cannot help letting it be known--"Without his telling--that he was better born than other country surgeons" (xv). This arrogant irrationalism is a part of his emotional life which he cannot detach from his ego; it feeds the illusions that isolate him in a narrow microcosm.

To help him liberate himself from his Idione, George Eliot creates Rev Farebrother who functions in Middlemarch as his foresight. Like Lydgate, the vicar is also a scientist who has had dreams of a great future. But his enthusiasm has been tempered by experience; he sees in Lydgate's nature a fatal division that is likely to frustrate his ambitious dreams. Trawley, Lydgate's friend and former roommate in Paris, the vicar reminisces, has had dreams of founding a Pythagorean community in the Backwoods but, because of his own weakness, he has ended up "practising at a German bath, and has married a rich patient." But Lydgate, who is rather self-conceited, fails to perceive the intended analogy with himself. He dismisses Trawley as an unpractical idealist while simultaneously congratulating himself for his "good sense." But the vicar wants him to know that he is not wiser than his friend:

> "Your scheme is a good deal more difficult to carry out than the Pythagorean community, though. You have not only got the old Adam in yourself against you, but you have got all those descendants of the original Adam who form the society around you. You see, I have paid twelve or thirteen years more than you for my knowledge of difficulties." (xvii)

As my thesis emphasizes, it is always what goes within the character that is most relevant in George Eliot. If Lydgate takes care of his inside, the descendants of the old Adam who make up society cannot do him much harm. But his massive conceit is a proof against Farebrother's warning. "The shortest way is to make your value felt so that people must put up with you whether you flatter them or not," he says. "But then," rejoins the vicar, "you must be sure of having the value, and you must keep yourself independent. Very few men can do that. Either you slip out of service altogether, and become good for nothing, or you wear the harness and draw a good deal where your yoke-fellows pull you." The vicar is touching Lydgate's essential flaw: he does not have a strong will; and one who lacks the will lacks the value. Farebrother goes on to stress the point that the doctor's relation with Bulstrode and women may threaten his independence. Women, he warns him, do also have their own projects just as Lydgate has his.

Lydgate does not, of course, take Farebrother's advice; he believes that he has enough experience of women to have a scientific view of them henceforth. For him it does not really matter what others think or do; he looks at the world through the tiny window of his isolated science laboratory. The vicar's humility baffles him: "A model clergyman, like a model doctor, ought to think his own profession the finest in the world, and take all knowledge as mere nourishment to his moral pathology and therapeutics" (xvii).

Meanwhile, Rosamond is attracted to Lydgate by that side of his nature which the narrator calls his "spots of commonness."

> In Rosamond's romance it was not necessary to imagine much about the inward life of the hero, or of his serious business in the world. . . the piquant fact about Lydgate was his good birth, which distinguished him from all Middlemarch admirers, and presented marriage as a prospect of rising in rank and getting a little nearer to that celestial condition on earth in which she should have nothing to do with vulgar people, and perhaps at last associate with relatives quite equal to the county people who looked down on the Middlemarchers. (lvi)

Like Lydgate, she too is the centre of her own world, which is founded on superficial tastes for refinement, acquired at Mrs Lemon's school. She looks at herself as the touchstone of culture; and to her, culture is nothing more than acquiring titled connections for oneself, being conscious of how one handles spoons and forks at dinner, knowing how "to get in and out of a carriage", and being

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in fashion without being concerned about the money that furnishes the luxury. Rosamond's egoism has that animal-like quality that is associated with Hetty Sorrel's. It is never penetrated by intelligence or any altruistic feeling. Her first display of her refinement is to rebel against her daughterhood: "Rosamond felt that she might have been happier if she had not been the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer. She disliked anything which reminded her that her mother's father had been an innkeeper" (x). In a world in which nothing really matters but "refinement", unrefined parents are worthless. Rosamond never doubts the rightness of her own conclusions. She is remarkably logical and consistent in her actions. Of all George Eliot's characters, she is probably the most consummate egoist, sheltered, as she is, by her fortunate ignorance. She has a strong will which helps her to get whatever she sets her mind to. "I never give up anything that I choose to do" (xxxvi), she tells Lydgate. One of the things she wants to do is to marry Lydgate who meets her stiff stipulations for "refinement": he has "very high connections;" he is arrogant, and "bore himself with the careless politeness of conscious superiority, and seemed to have the right clothes on by a certain natural affinity" (xxvii).[31]

Meanwhile, Lydgate has decided against early marriage in deference to his scientific research. But since his scientific approach to women is a guarantee against falling in love by accident such as occurred before, in the case of Laure, a little self-indulging flirtation with Rosamond will be a most beneficient diversion from the rigours of his labour. "Being a little in love," he thinks, "was agreeable, and did not interfere with graver pursuits. Flirtation, after all, was not a singeing process" (xxvii). Like such other youthful egoists as Captain Wybrow and Arthur Donnithorne, he does not consider the effect of his flirtation on the second party. When the vicar warns him of the possible result of his flirtations, he finds refuge in the usual aslyum of the egoist--projecting his feelings into his victim. Rosamond, he felt sure, "took everything as lightly as he intended it" (xxxi). He regards women as flowers intended to fascinate men at idle intervals.

Meanwhile, Rosamond instead of considering herself Lydgate's flower toy, busies herself with thoughts of her future home as the wife of the famous physician who has the right connections.

> She seemed to be sailing with a fair wind just whither she would go, and her thoughts were much occupied with a handsome house in Lowick Gate which she hoped would by-an-by be vacant. She was quite determined, when she was married, to rid herself adroitly of all visitors who were not agreeable to her at her father's. (xxvii)

Lydgate is irresistibly drawn to her by his emotional life which is capable of swaying his judgment. Their subsequent marriage is not a consequence of Rosamond's schemes; it is a surrender to that "old Adam" in him against which Faregrother has warned him. The feeling that prompts his engagement to Rosamond is not that of a pure love, but one of affection for his patronizing egoism:

> . . . and Lydgate, forgetting everything else, completely mastered by the outrush of tenderness at the sudden belief that this sweet young creature depended on him for her joy, actually put his arms round her, folding her gently and protectingly--he was used to being gentle with the weak and suffering--and kissed each of the two large tears. (xxxi)

Tenderness for the "weak and suffering" woman is a unique aspect of his egoism. This tenderness originates in an Idionic tendency to worship himself in another's weakness. A weak woman can better worship the strength of a man, and he has no illusions that Rosamond worships him. Ironically, it is Rosamond's weakness which always conquers his great strength. After his engagement, he rationalizes his weakness by insisting to the vicar that "marriage must be the best thing for a man who wants to work steadily" (xxxvi). Apparently, he has forgotten that he had earlier told the same parson that marriage would hinder his great work.

But the arrogance of his egoism is dramatized more fully in what he does immediately following the betrothal. He does nothing to ascertain Rosamond's feelings about his medical interests, but assumes that being a woman, her function is to adore rather than to understand. He is aware that she expects him to live in a "refined" style, but fails to educate her about his limited financial resources; he is rather flattered that she should think him wealthier than he really is. Just as he will not enter into trivial clerical disputes, he feels it a humiliation to enter into necessary financial discussions with his prospective father-in-law. Instead, he enthusiastically accepts all the consequences of his engagement, even at the expense of his research.

Rev Farebrother is surprised that Lydgate's scientific laboratory has become disorganized since his engagement. "Eros has degenerated," he observes playfully, "he began by introducing order and harmony, and now he brings back chaos." The mental confusion which begins with his preparations for marriage will eventually ruin him. He has given himself up to his emotional nature. Eros brings harmony when it is informed by the intellect. His affection for Rosamond is a fulfillment of that Idionic aspect of his nature which is contemptuous of the "ordinary" way of living. Commenting on his preparations for the wedding, the narrator notes that "he was no radical in relation to anything but medical reform and the prosecution of discovery. In the rest of practical life he walked by hereditary habit; half from that personal pride and unreflecting egoism which I have already called commonness, and half from that naivete which belonged to preoccupation with favourite ideas" (xxxvi). Once more the emphasis is on the way he thinks.

However, after marriage, he makes serious efforts to return to his former world in which all life is seen to float around his intellectual search for the primitive tissue. But Rosamond, who cannot comprehend the rightness of a system of existence that is not subordinated to her notions of "refinement", refuses simply to be assimilated into her husband's world. When he is explaining his enthusiasm for Vesalius to her, she blushes and looks at him like "the garden flowers" (xxxvi), and then says in her enchanting way, "I often wish you had not been a medical man" (xlv). Lydgate is surprised, but tells her, "Nay, Rosy, don't say that," drawing her closer to him. "That is like saying you wish you had married another man." The dialogue reveals the gulf that separates their microcosms.

Gradually, Lydgate's great ambition is lost sight of as he dissipates his energy in little stratagems to keep creditors at bay. Rosamond's refined habits have been expensive to maintain. In all his domestic conflicts, he shows frustration rather than decision. Instead of self-analysis, he regularly finds solace in the egoistic feeling that moral imbecility is "the way of all women" (lviii). But at times he does remember Dorothea's impassioned identification of herself with her husband's cherished ideals: "He minds about nothing else--and I mind about nothing else." Inspired by Dorothea's idealism, he attempts to convince Rosamond that they can avoid the debts which are ruining his work by returning some of the unpaid for goods to their creditors. But Rosamond is not Dorothea. She has the vegetative soul of a flower. "What can I do, Tertius?" In this question there is a stifling of feeling, a stifling of those attributes that distinguish the human species from plants and flowers.[32]

It is clear that Lydgate is not responding adequately to the situation. His "proud resistance to humiliating consequences" prevents him from emancipating himself from his ego, and hence being able to see things objectively in their relationships. He fails to see his wife's indifference as something rooted in a past which is as valid to her as his scientific researches are to him. Such knowledge is necessary if he is to find accomodation for their two worlds. But the major crisis of their marriage is precipitated by Lydgate's decision to give up their inconveniently big house in order to discharge the debt that has accrued from their marriage expenses. Rosamond blames her husband for their misery and Lydgate is exasperated because his wife cannot understand him:

> "If we are to be in that position it will be entirely your own doing, Tertius," said Rosamond, turning round to speak with the fullest conviction.
>
> "You will not behave as you ought to do to your own family. You offended Captain Lyd-

> gate. Sir Godwin was very kind to me when we were at Quallingham, and I am sure if you showed proper regard to him and told him your affairs, he would do anything for you. But rather than that, you like giving up our house and furniture to Mr Ned Plymdale."
>
> There was something like fierceness in Lydgate's eyes, as he answered with new violence, "Well then, if you will have it so, I do like it. I admit that I like it better than making a fool of myself by going to beg where it's of no use. Understand then, that it is what I like to do." (lxiv)

The logic of the assumptions that each makes for his microcosm makes this clash inevitable. They would not have clashed if they did not think the way they did. Rosamond cannot understand why a beautiful, flower-like girl of "refined" habits should not have her way in all things. On his own side Lydgate is scandalized because a weak female dares challenge his concept of life: "He was prepared to be indulgent towards feminine weakness, but not towards feminine dictation." However, Lydgate's will is not nearly as potent as he pretends it to be. His intellect, as the reader knows, is subservient to his passion, and his passion is controlled by Rosamond, who "had not only her claims" but also "a hold on his heart, and it was his intense desire that the hold should remain strong."

After the last clash each recedes further into his ego. "It was as if a fracture in delicate crystal had begun." Lydgate dreads to open up any future discussion which "might again urge him to violent speech." At the same time, Rosamond, feeling that her husband's strange attachment to his laboratory prevents him from fully appreciating her "refinements", decides to carry out her own wishes without consulting with her husband. These sentiments only lead to actions that alienate them further.

Meanwhile, disappointed hopes bring disenchantment to both husband and wife. Ironically, in spite of her "refinement" and pride, Rosamond does not mind debts. For her, it is not the debts, but the creditors' threats to repossess her prestigious home which bring shame. The prospect of losing a home that is an important part of her "refinement" is, in her way of thinking, akin to the loss of her better half. She rightly reflects that "the world was not ordered to her liking, and Lydgate was part of that world" (lxiv). Because her mind cannot, like Dorothea's, find solace in altruistic thoughts, she is bored with self-absorption: "she was oppressed by ennui, and by that dissatisfaction which in women's minds is continually turning into a trivial jealousy, referring to no real claims, springing from no deeper passion that the vague exactingness of egoism" (lix). Her thoughts seldom pass from the "I" to the "you" except to blame the "you" for her suffering.

Lydgate too is frustrated because his talent is wasted in trivial domestic concerns, while the work that will bring fame remains undone. He too, like his wife, does not seek outside help but retires into his microcosm, isolating himself from those who would fain help him. The vicar tries, but in vain, to reach him. He discusses his own financial problems freely with him with a view to drawing him out of himself. He hints to him that he, the vicar, is indebted to him for his improved circumstances. But the idea of receiving aid from the vicar only piques his arrogance: "He knew as distinctly as possible that this was an offer of help to himself from Farebrother, and he could not bear it" (lxiii). Eventually, he seeks the relief which he cannot find in human fellowship in opium and gambling. In George Eliot opium and gambling militate against the consciousness which alone can bring a character to his Hieria. Lydgate hits his moral nadir when Fred Vincy discovers him at the Green Dragon "looking exicted and betting." Reflecting on the change that has come to both Fred Vincy and Lydgate, the narrator says that "it was a strange reversal of attitudes." Fred, the usually careless, self-indulgent gambler, now looking grave and morally conscious, while his brother-in-law "who had habitually an air of self-possessed strength and a certain meditativeness that seemed to lie behind his most observant attention, was acting, watching, speaking with that excited narrow consciousness which reminds one of an animal with fierce eyes and retractile claws" (lxvi).

The animal imagery that is associated with his betting posture suggests that he has reached the moral and social isolation which the egoist must attain before his destruction. The narrator deliberately contrasts him with Fred in order to show how a character through his thoughts can be responsible for his salvation or ruin. Fred, the egoist, is saved from himself by his belief in humanity which he shows in his veneration for the "deep-souled womanhood" in Mary Garth and in his willingness to confide in the vicar and in the Garths. Lydgate does not venerate what is noble in women. It is analogously significant that he prefers Rosamond to Mary; but Fred knows that Mary is worth more than a thousand Rosamonds. Even more significant is the fact that Lydgate cannot confide in his fellow men. Consequently, he comes, like Casaubon, to feed "too much on the inward sources" (ii) at the expense of the outside resources that abound with nutritive verdure.

Lydgate borrows money from Bulstrode, against whom Mr Farebrother has repeatedly warned him. In so doing he acquires for himself the moral stigma that attaches itself to the banker. The subsequent public opprobrium that accrues from his association with Mr Bulstrode shatters his rather fragile will. But rather than make efforts to rescue his honour, he falls into his egoistic habit of self-pitying, and like the unregenerate egoist blames others for his own faults:

> He felt himself becoming violent and unreasonable as if raging under the pain of stings: he was ready to curse the day on which he had come to Middlemarch. Everything that had happened to him there seemed a mere preparation for this hateful fatality, which had come as a blight on his honourable ambition, and must make even people who had only vulgar standards regard his reputation as irrevocably damaged. . . . Lydgate thought of himself as the sufferer, and of others as the agents who had injured his lot. He had meant everything to turn out differently; and others had thrust themselves into his life and thwarted his purposes. (lxxiii)

He has been internally shattered long before the Bulstrode episode, which merely serves to throw into relief his moral bankruptcy. Ironically, it is not the vulgar public, but he himself who thinks that his reputation is irrevocably damaged. A strong-willed man cannot be permanently ruined by a rumour which he very well knows to be false. What shatters him is his wounded pride. A self-worshipper does not like to look at his mutilated image. His reflections seldom transcend his ego.

Meanwhile, Rosamond starts mourning for herself on hearing the rumour. She wonders "what she had that was worth living for" (lxxv). Her suffering is heightened by the fact that her illusions have survived her reality:

> The shock to Rosamond was terrible. It seemed to her that no lot could be so cruelly hard as hers--to have married a man who had become the centre of infamous suspicions. In many cases it is inevitable that the shame is felt to be the worst part of crime; and it would have required a great deal of disentangling reflection, such as had never entered into Rosamond's life, for her in these moment to feel that her trouble was less than if her husband

> had been certainly known to have done
> something criminal. All the shame seemed
> to be there. And she had innocently married
> this man with the belief that he and his
> family were a glory to her! (lxxv)

Rosamond is much more consistent than her husband. Her world of "refinement" does not derive its values from what can be proved to be true, but from opinions that must always be applauding. She has no need to inquire after the truth; the vindication of her husband will mean nothing to her. The logic of her egoistic conception of life leads to the irrevocable conclusion that she must leave Middlemarch.

However, Rosamond decides, after the confrontation, to reconstruct her world on new materials. Since Lydgate no longer meets her stipulations for "refinement", she ought to build her hopes on a young man of artistic turn of mind who will spend a life time adoring her. Her fancied Cupid is Ladislaw: "Will Ladislaw was always to be a bachelor and live near her, always to be at her command, and have an understood though never fully expressed passion for her, which would be sending out lambent flames every now and then in interesting scenes" (lxxv). In this construction of things, she fails to see her prospective lover as a separate individual with interests that my not coincide with hers.

Unlike Lydgate, Will, as his name signifies, has a strong will which enables him to rise above the weak side of his nature. He too has ambitions of his own; he refuses to be enslaved by Rosamond's Circean advances. Rosamond is stunned when Ladislaw, in fact, tells her that he prefers another woman to her. For a narcissistic egoist like Rosamond the idea that there is a superior object of worship outside herself is dreadful.[33] But the revelation does not bring the consciousness of a wider existence to her; instead she does what the perfect Idiones do--retires into her bedroom "and lay in apparent torpor, as she had done once before a memorable day of grief" (lxxviii). She has no internal resources, like Dorothea, to help her convert her sorrows into a generous feeling that flows outwards towards humanity at large. Her ego absorbs her sorrow as it absorbs Lydgate's love. Her subsequent confession to Dorothea that she is the one loved by Ladislaw rather than herself is not a spontaneous act of generosity, but a face-saving device to ward off the opprobrium which her conduct merits. Since her reputation depends on opinions, she is reluctant to leave Dorothea free to think her an adulterous woman. She has no feelings which can justify the narrator's ironic statement that she has acted under the force of "an emotion stronger than her own" (lxxxi).[34] She is always cold and calculating and never acts from impulse. The alleged impulsive generosity of hers is analogous to Hetty's forced regeneration in jail; it has neither emotional nor moral force behind it.

Meanwhile, Lydgate is offered a second opportunity to come out of his microcosm. Dorothea shows him that a world wider than his or Rosamond's exists, and that this world is still full of possibilities for those with the will to grasp them. A single incident need not shatter his will to do good. But Dorothea's words have the vagueness of a dream for him. He can only mournfully confess that, "that might do if I had my old trust in myself." His real problem is loss of confidence in himself which is a result of his inability to modify the way he thinks. He never sees the success of his research as dependent on a system of modifiable relationships. To attain such a consciousness, he has to free himself from that inside feeling which enslaves him to Rosamond's and Middlemarch's opinion. But rather than shed his arrogant egoism, he finds a new outlet for it in patronising his wife: "It is impossible for me now to do anything--to take any step without considering my wife's happiness. . . . I can't see her miserable. She married me without knowing what she was getting into, and it might have been better for her if she had not married me" (lxxvi). Lydgate has a large emotional life and his feeling for Rosamond is very real, but in her weakness, his egoism finds nourishment. She remains to him a symbol of that weakness which must yield to man's preeminence. And at the end Rosamond, disappointed by Ladislaw's rejection of her, returns to him for shelter, and he accepts her as his burden.

Lydgate eventually leaves Middlemarch to settle in London where, like his friend Trawley, he ends up practicing for wealth, alternating between London and continental bathing-places. Many years afterwards, reflecting on his past, he calls his wife a "basil plant" that has "flourished wonderfully on a murdered man's brains" (Finale). Rosamond does indeed feed on his murdered brains, but his failure comes from the internal logic of his own mind. Like Mr Casaubon, he has a theory of life that does not take into account his own values and the feelings of others. When faced with inevitable difficulties, he fails to see the source of his error in himself, but instead blocks consciousness by receding into his ego and indulging his weakness in patronizing his wife. On the other hand, Rosamond succeeds because she is more internally consistent than Lydgate and has also a stronger will. Her ambition is simply to be "refined" and by identifying this ambition with Lydgate's emotional life, she is able, by her stronger will, to graft Lydgate's life into her own.

Bulstrode

Through a psychological sequence that is perfectly in accord with his nature, Bulstrode creates a god in his own image, not because he wants to give a religious sanction to his egoistic lust for power, but because he sincerely believes that Providence has selected him for a great purpose. The banker's Providence does not choose its servants by their merits, but by a kind of divine whim, which erratically favours one man and damns another:[35] "He was doctrinally convinced that there was a total absence of merit in him." His very shortcomings, his sins, are, in fact, "a clenching proof" that he is a peculiar instrument of the divine intention (liii).

This doctrine, like Casaubon's, Dorothea's, or Lydgate's theories, isolates him in a narrow microcosm, that cuts him off from the larger experience of mankind. Always convinced that he is the centre of creation, he at first fancies himself called to a "missionary labour," but when he is invited to become a partner in a shady business, he convinces himself that the call is an opportunity to unite his "distinguished" religious gifts with "successful business" (lxi). The morality involved is really irrelevant in his own case. As God's agent, he is permitted such minor indulgences as using the materialism of the devil to further the empire of God:

> God's cause was something distinct from his own retitude of conduct: it enforced a discrimination of God's enemies, who were to be used merely as instruments, and whom it would be as well if possible to keep out of money and consequent influence. Also, profitable investments in trades where the power of the prince of this world showed its most active devices, became sanctified by a right application of the profits in the hands of God's servant. (lxi)

Bulstrode's theory is an unconscious indulgence of his lust for wealth and power. The narrator appropriately observes that the banker's "desires had been stronger than his theoretical beliefs" and that he "had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs."

All Bulstrode's actions are controlled by a doctrine that has no reference to human feeling. When he robs Dunkirk's daughter of her possessions, he is satisfied that God does not want much wealth to go to "a young woman and her husband who were given up to the lightest pursuits, and might scatter it abroad in triviality--people who seemed to lie outside the path of remarkable providences" (lxi). He refuses to give Fred Vincy the clearance which he needs for his material wellbeing on the cruelly generous plea that he "cannot regard wealth as a blessing to those who use it simply as a harvest for this world" (xiii). Here, as elsewhere, language is used to camouflage his intolerantly jealous egoism. When Lydgate, who superintends his Fever Hospital without pay, asks for a loan to clear himself of pressing debts, he tells him "You should simply become a bankrupt instead of involving yourself in further obligations, and continuing a doubtful struggle" (lxvii). But when he is in trouble and needs the doctor's services, he lends the money in order "to create in him a strong sense of personal obligation" (lxx). He never engages in an act of generosity which does not advance his selfish interests.

His is the consummate egoism that aims at the material as well as the spiritual control of Middlemarch. Rev Farebrother calls his religion "a sort of worldly-spiritual cliqueism", adding that the banker looks at the rest of mankind "as a doomed carcass which is to nourish [him] for heaven" (lvii). Bulstrode confirms the vicar's assessment of his religion when he tells Lydgate that he would "have no interest in hospitals if I believed that nothing more was concerned therein than the cure of mortal diseases." The hospital, like his numerous private loans, is a means of gaining spiritual control over the people. His responsibility, he affirms is "one of sacred accountableness," whereas that of his enemies is one of "gratifying a spirit of worldly opposition" (xiii).

But Bulstrode is neither a simple egoist like Rosamond nor a canting religious hypocrite. His sincere belief in God carries with it seeds of morality which lend tragic eminence to his moral struggles.[36] He dreads the opinion of men, not because he is morally conscious, but because the religion of Christ demands a certain ethical standard from devotees. His religious fear of the unfavourable opinion of his fellow men is a moral feeling, which, in the novel, is opposed to his inhuman doctrine of the elect. This feeling introduces morality into his subsequent confrontation with Raffles, and raises him above the level of a common criminal, although it is not strong enough to help him to emerge successfully from his microcosm.

Raffles is the banker's alter ego[37] whom he had previously engaged in a business that was not strictly honest, and who returns after so many years absence, like a tormenting ghost of a past that he is anxious to forget. This unwelcome visitor is also an egoist who, like Bulstrode, believes himself to be the favourite son of Providence; he also sees his former accomplice as providentially made to satisfy his material needs. "I am so surprised at seeing you, old fellow," he tells an embarrassed Bulstrode, "because I picked up a letter--what you may call a providential thing. It's uncommonly fortunate I met you though" (liii). Raffles has no religious fears and his very presence threatens the foundations of the banker's world. But instead of making an open confession which is the only way by which he can begin to see things as they appear to others, he shrinks into his microcosm, hoping that his good works can sanctify his evil deeds: "Those misdeeds even when committed--had they not been half sanctified by the singleness of his desire to devote himself and all he possessed to the furtherance of the divine scheme?" He resolves to make amends, not by open confession but by secretly restoring some of his ill-gotten wealth to Will Ladislaw, the right heir.

In George Eliot, the unregenerate egoist's efforts to subordinate morality to his desires often leads to more heinous crimes. Bulstrode feels guilty about his relationship with Raffles, but ironically his moral feeling, instead of regenerating him, inspires thoughts that are unintentionally murderous. He prays to God, but his prayer is an unconscious wish for the death of his enemy.

A unique quality of his is that he never consciously does evil. He merely indulges in the necessary desire and allows himself to operate indirectly through Providence. His ability to use Providence to do his dirty work is minutely represented in the process that leads to the death of Raffles. He simply omits to tell Mrs Abel that alcohol will be fatal to the patient. And when the nurse innocently solicits alcohol for the dying man, he neither agrees nor refuses:

> "If you please, sir, should I have no brandy nor nothing to give the poor creetur? He feels sinking away, and nothing else will he swaller --and but little strength in it, if he did--only the opium. And he says more and more he's sinking down through the earth."
>
> To her surprise, Mr Bulstrode did not answer. A struggle was going on within him.
>
> "I think he must die for want o' support, if he goes on in that way. When I nursed my poor master, Mr Robisson, I had to give him port-wine and brandy constant, and a big glass at a time," added Mrs Abel, with a touch of remonstrance in her tone.
>
> But again Mr Bulstrode did not answer immediately and she continued, "It's not a time to spare when people are at death's door, nor would you wish it, sir, I'm sure. Else I should give him our own bottle o'rum as we keep by us. But a sitter-up so as you've been, and doing everything as laid in your power--"
>
> Here a key was thrust through the inch of doorway, and Mr Bulstrode said huskily, "That is the

> key of the wine-cooler. You will find plenty of brandy there." (lxx)

The scene is an excellent example of George Eliot's use of the psychological process to explore the mind of an unredeemable egoist confronted with a serious moral problem. Bulstrode manipulates Mrs Abel for the role of Providence, while he himself plays the part of a reluctant benefactor. He leaves the scene with a sense of relief from moral pressure. For him the moment of Raffles' death is one of triumph, when the God he has created after his own image seems to be perfectly in accord with his wishes, with his doctrinal approach to existence. But true peace of mind comes only from the regeneration which is a result of moral consciousness. The banker's peace is, however, short-lived, for on the heels of his good fortunes follow the evil tidings of his misdeeds. He is disenchanted and falls into self-pitying, feeling that Providence has betrayed him. His suffering devours him from within like a corroding substance, because he cannot relieve pressure from himself by thinking of others. Unlike Dorothea, he fails to think of himself as a moral agent who is eternally linked to others in a system of complex relationships. Consequently he, like Casaubon, withdraws himself from human contact in order to worship himself in his sorrows.

By contrast the reaction of Mrs Bulstrode to her husband's disgrace, which is also hers, is generous and altruistic. Instead of indulging in a self-pitying sorrow like her husband or Rosamond, she thinks of her husband, of their children, and of the domestic happiness that they have shared together. These thoughts help her to transcend her ego, and to accept moral responsibility for her husband's actions. To assist her in her resolution, she symbolically puts on mourning dress, "I will mourn and not reproach" (lxxiv). In this resolution she goes to condole with her husband, who is pining away in the darkness of his bedroom. As she looks at her withered and shrunken husband, "a movement of new compassion and old tenderness went through her like a great wave, and putting one hand on his which rested on the arm of the chair, and the other on his shoulder, she said, solemnly but kindly--'Look up, Nicholas.'" Hers is the deep-souled voice of womanhood bringing with it the human emotion which her husband has lost to his doctrine of salvation. Bulstrode does not speak but weeps with his wife. And, appropriately for his character, his confession is silent. "He did not say, 'I am innocent.'"

Like Casaubon and Lydgate, Bulstrode does not get consolation from his doctrine but from the sympathy of an "imperfectly-taught woman" (lxxiv). Mrs Bulstrode's moral efficacy is derived from her unified sensibilities. She has no self-centred theory of life which divides her intellect from her emotions; her feelings generate humanizing ideas, while her husband who cannot feel with others becomes desiccated morally and intellectually. But theories are not evil in themselves. Dorothea is infinitely superior to Mrs Bulstrode when she learns, through experience, to unify theory and emotion in the service of her fellow men. She does for Casaubon and Lydgate what Mrs Bulstrode does for her husband. George Eliot allows the egoists of Middlemarch the benefit of the consolation that comes from the deep soul of the woman, not because they merit it, but because each, in his own selfish way, is groping after some way of life that is theoretically intended to benefit society.

Society

In Middlemarch George Eliot creates two polarized communities, representing Idione and Hieria respectively. The Idionic world is self-contented and morally unconscious. This world is populated by the Vincys, the Mrs Cadwalladers, the Chettams, and the Featherstones. The mayor of Middlemarch appropriately summarizes the virtues that he holds up to his subjects when he tells Bulstrode that "I'm a plain Churchman now, just as I used to be before doctrines came. I take the world as I find it, in trade and everything else. I'm contented to be no worse than my neighbours" (xiii). Middlemarch's is that deadly conservative form of egoism that is too sure of its self to allow any novel or altruistic ideas to penetrate it. Mrs Cadwallader takes Dorothea to task for being a little different. For her, non-conformity is synonymous with insanity: "We have all got to exert ourselves a little to keep sane, and call things by the same names as other people call them" (liv).

The stifling world of Middlemarch is dramatized in Featherstone and his relations. With consummate skill, the author shows the Vincys, the Waules, the Solomons, the Powederells, and their relations greedily expecting the death of their kinsman whose cynicism is only matched by the cupidity of their avarice. What is important in this scene, in which brothers and sisters fight each other for the right to inherit someone who is expected to die, is that oppressive narrowness which is thoroughly unaware of the larger world that surrounds it. Because of their narrowness, Middlemarchers do not want integration with humanity at large. They resent foreigners and refuse any new ideas. Mr Hawley expects nothing good from "any cursed alien blood, Jew, Corsican, or Gypsy" (lxxi). Ladislaw is popularly characterized as the "grandson of a thieving Jew pawnbroker" (lxxvii).

Opinions founded on prejudice and habits of self-importance have more weight in the Middlemarch microcosm than a scientific invention or a rational idea. Mrs Dollop's opinion that "Doctor Lydgate meant to let the people die in the hospital, if not to poison them for the sake of cutting them up without saying by your leave or with your leave" (xlv) is accepted in Middlemarch as an incontestable truth. And opinions such as this help to frustrate Lydgate's efforts to bring about medical reform. It is in this context that the attempts of the Dorotheas and the Lydgates to integrate Middlemarch into a larger, moral universe can be seen as heroic.

To assist the Dorotheas in their labour, George Eliot has deliberately made part of the community morally conscious. This device leaves the reformed Dorotheas and Ladislaws free to settle in London where they can operate on a much larger scale, while the Garths and the Farebrothers, who represent the nearest approach to Hieria in Middlemarch, remain to carry on the task of sowing the seeds of moral consciousness. The peace and joy of the family lives of the Garths and Farebrothers is a vision of the paradise which is attainable only when men live an integrated life in a moral world. Caleb is generally sought after because he is "more anxious for his employer's interests than his own" (lxviii). He has, in fact, attained the state of perfection in which the interest of society merges with that of the individual. He anticipates Daniel of Daniel Deronda who makes altruism a religion. In sharp contrast with Lydgate, Dorothea, Casaubon, or Bulstrode, Caleb attains his Hieria, not by means of a self-centred theory, but by uniting his feelings and intellect in his service to humanity. He tells Bulstrode that "I would injure no man if I could help it; even if I thought God winked at it. I hope I should have a feeling for my fellow-creature" (lxix). His judgment, so far as it can be called judgment, derives from his sensitiveness rather than from a theory that is divorced from human feelings. When he refuses to work for Bulstrode, he does not go into a doctrinal discussion of the banker's hypocrisy, but is content to say that "I have that feeling inside me, that I can't go on working with you." In his gentle way, he is here trying to resurrect Bulstrode's dead feelings. He has no enemies and in his relationships he symbolizes the social and moral integration that Middlemarch desperately needs.

Rev Farebrother presents Caleb's daughter Mary Garth to Lydgate as a representative of that deep-souled womanhood that can help a man attain his Hieria. The beauty of her intellect and feeling not only contrasts with Rosamond's superficial refinements, but makes a mockery of the conventional opinions of the Lydgates and Casaubons that women are ornamental plants without souls.

Through experience, Rev Farebrother, as we have seen, has disciplined his own egoistic desires, and hence he can work with Mary and Caleb for the rescue of Fred Vincy, an egoist from the Idionic section of Middlemarch. Their success with Fred shows that Middlemarch is capable of moral and social reform, and that it can no more be isolated morally than socially. The innovative spirit of the Reform Bill and the moral flame of the Dorotheas will be diffused in Middlemarch through the gently soothing influences of the Garths and the Farebrothers.

The drama of Middlemarch proves again the main assumption of my thesis that the characters' fortunes depend on their thoughts. Through the way they think Casaubon, Dorothea, Lydgate, Rosamond, and Bulstrode isolate themselves in narrow microcosms which clash with each other. Those, like Dorothea, who, through experience and suffering, modify their thoughts are regenerated morally and reach their Hieria. Some die in moral ignorance, and others simply acquire experience. As the characters grow in moral consciousness, society grows out of its moral isolation and seeks communion with the macrocosm that surrounds it.

Chapter VIII

Daniel Deronda

Daniel Deronda is a logical conclusion of a series of experiments on the relationship between the mind and the action that it inspires or between the microcosm which the mind creates and the macrocosm that surrounds it. Structurally, it is not a radical departure from the author's other works; George Eliot never really departs from her basic principle of patterning her works on the multiplicity of human relationships. In Daniel Deronda, psychological relationships are as important as they are in her previous novels. In fact, to talk of the form of the novel is primarily to talk of the difference between the minds of Daniel, Gwendolen, and Grandcourt. This difference is so great that many able critics have come to think that Daniel Deronda can be divided into irreconcilable parts.[1] Harold Fisch relevantly points out that "George Eliot is herself conscious of the difference in timbre and effect between the two halves of the novel: and more than that, this very difference is, in a way, the central theme of the novel."[2] I prefer, however, to use "characters" rather than "the two halves of the novel."[3] The use of contrast is, as the reader is aware, by no means peculiar to Daniel Deronda. What makes the difference ~~in~~ "timbre and effect" between the worlds of Daniel and Gwendolen so conspicuous is that Daniel attains his Hieria early in the novel while Gwendolen does not do so until the very end. The difference, of course, originates from the respective assumptions which their minds make and these assumptions are the subject of my thesis.

Daniel

Daniel is unique in the sense that his egoism does not derive from any self-centred theory or desire, but from what appears to be his broad-mindedness. He demonstrates par excellence what I have elsewhere emphasized in this thesis that a character is, in George Eliot, what and how he thinks. Having read widely in history and developed broad sympathies, he has come to believe that a gentleman does not take sides in conflicts. His microcosm is the one in which he, for some unknown reason, finds himself in the middle of something great without any exertion on his part; it is the one in which thought is in itself an end, and does not lead to any significant action. The danger in such an attitude is that it creates a vacuum. In the case of Daniel, the vacuum thus created leads to self-indulgent indolence and diffusiveness. Sir Hugo warns him against indifference: "don't become indifferent to bad tobacco!. . . it is good to be unselfish and generous; but don't carry that too far. It will not do to give yourself to be melted down for the benefit of the tallow-trade" (xvi).[4] But the narrator's commentary is more analytic of the paralyzing effect that his diffused sympathy has on him:

> His early-wakened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action: as soon as he took up any antagonism, though only in thought, he seemed to himself like the Sabine warriors in the memorable story --with nothing to meet his spear but flesh of his flesh, and objects that he loved. His imagination had so wrought itself to the habit of seeing things as they probably appeared to others, that a strong partisanship, unless it were against an immediate oppression, had become an insincerity in him. . . A too reflective and diffusive sympathy was in danger of paralysing in him that indignation against wrong and that selectness of fellowship which are the conditions of moral force. (xxxii)

Daniel finds himself in the ironic situation in which his large sympathies, from lack of specific aims, have become a moral incubus. Moral immobility has replaced his egoistic concern for his fatherhood. He desperately needs "some external event, or some inward light, that will urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy." This event is provided by his successive meetings with Mirah, Gwendolen, and Mordecai. Each encounter deepens his understanding of himself and brings him a step further towards total identification with his Hieria.

Daniel comes across Mirah when he is rowing aimlessly on the Thames. What can be more self-indulging than this habit of rowing leisurely on the vastness of the river in the evening when "the shadows are lengthening and the lights are mellowing?" For Daniel it is the moment of greatest diffusion, when he totally forgets "his own existence" and "feels melted in the general life"[5] that surrounds him. It is good to identify with the general life when one has a particular purpose in view. But Daniel's day-dreaming is an unconscious effort to avoid action. We are told that he, in fact, forgets everything when dreaming: "He was forgetting everything else in a half-speculative, half involuntary identification of himself with the objects he was looking at" (xvii).

He is shocked out of his reverie by the sight of a wretched girl about to drown herself. "'Great God!' the words escaped Deronda in a tone so low and solemn that seemed like a prayer become unconsciously vocal." The cry is that of his general life, seeking acquaintance with a particular life. The most interesting difference between Daniel and other characters of George Eliot is that he grows from the general to the particular; others progress from the particular to the general. The ghastly appearance of Mirah resurrects the dynamic force that lies buried in him:

> The agitating impression this forsaken girl was making on him stirred a fibre that lay close to his deepest interest in the fates of women--"perhaps my mother was like this one." The old thought had come now with a new impetus of mingled feeling, and urged that exclamation in which both East and West have for ages concentrated their awe in the presence of enexorable calamity. (xvii)[6]

The importance of Mirah to Daniel cannot be overestimated. She awakens in him a consciousness of the unique demands of the individual human being, and this awakening eventually brings him to Mordecai and to his real vocation. Immediately following this encounter, he develops interest in Jewish affairs, and in Frankfort we see him haunting Jewish synagogues for clues that will lead to Mirah's relations. The quest deepens both his sympathy and experience with the result that he acquires new interest in the plight of women. He associates Mirah with his mother whose uncertain fate stands in his memory as the fate of oppressed womanhood.

In reality, Daniel is drawn to Mirah because of his mind's desire to find anchor in something solid. In spite, however, of his contact with this suffering girl, he remains unsettled and uncertain of his future. He simply does not know what to do with his life, which remains a burden to him. His egoism is related to his inability to make up his mind about anything; his microcosm is the one in which nothing really happens. He is wandering in Europe in a vague quest for something worthwhile when he encounters Gwendolen at a Leubronn gambling house. His reaction to her shows his indecision. He contemplates her from a distance, and does nothing more:

> Was she beautiful or not beautiful? and what was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance? Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams? Probably the evil; else why was the effect that of unrest rather than of undisturbed charm? Why was the wish to look again felt as coercion and not as a longing in which the whole being consents? (i)

These questions tell the reader of the state of Deronda's paralyzed mind. He is too indolent to make up his mind about her. He wants to know of her character without approaching her. He has even to be forced to look at her. Later, he finds himself attached to her without knowing why.

He is drawn to Mordecai by his need for something that will make life meaningful. Before he meets with him, he is yearning after a friend, "a confidant to whom he could open himself" (xxxvii). If he did not think the way he did, he would never have become attached to the Jewish prophet. What he thinks is therefore as important to the development of Daniel Deronda as it is to my thesis. Mordecai functions in the novel as his spiritual self, as the means by which his vague yearning for an ideal purpose becomes concretized. He relevantly regards Daniel as "my new life--my new self--who will live when this breath is all breathed out" (xl).[7] His expectation is perfectly in accord with the end that Deronda, who has been trying to live outside his ego in order to unify himself with a larger nature, is yearning after. Mordecai's role of helping a character to attain his Hieria is by no means novel in George Eliot. Thomas à Kempis plays a similar role for Maggie Tulliver; Rev Lyon for Felix Holt; Savonarola for Romola; Dinah Morris for Adam Bede.[8] Only an understanding of the varied roles of the mentor in George Eliot can help the reader to appreciate the psychological importance of Mordecai in the conception of Daniel Deronda.[9]

Daniel's initial reaction to Mordecai, like his reaction to Gwendolen, is one of vague suspicion. He is inclined to dismiss him as a monomaniac whose fanaticism is "intensified" by "obstacles and hastening death" (xli).

But he and Mordecai have much in common and their relationship with each other is brought about by the logic of their lives. Mordecai too has been an egoist, who has had dreams of being the life and centre of a world, of a nation. But disease and hard experience have made him realize the limitations of the individual. He has come to realize that the individual is either a part of a larger whole or he is nothing, and consequently he has buried his Idione in his desire to merge wholly with another human being. Like Deronda, he is a man of vision. His visions are real, not because they are prophetic, but because they proceed from the internal logic of his life: "The yearning which had panted upward from out of over-whelming discouragements had grown into a hope--the hope into a confident belief, which, instead of being checked by the clear conception he had of his hastening decline, took rather the intensity of expectant faith in a prophecy which has only brief space to get fulfilled" (xxxviii). The idea which he has passionately held all his life long becomes more and more incarnate as his physical energy ebbs. In Middlemarch one is confronted with characters who fail because their theories are divorced from their feelings, but in Mordecai passion overflows outwards to electrify theory. For this reason his mind operates in concretized images because it has attained the creative stage, at which the Idione has completely disappeared, leaving the Hieria to radiate light like the sun:

> But the long-contemplated figure had come as an emotional sequence of Mordecai's firmest theoretic convictions; it had been wrought from the imagery of his most passionate life; and it inevitably reappeared--reappeared in a more specific self-asserting form than ever. Deronda had that sort of resemblance to preconceived type which a finely

> individual bust or portrait has to the more generalized copy left in our minds after a long interval. . . . And now, his face met Mordecai's inward gaze as if it had always belonged to the awaited friend. . . .(xxxviii)

What is emphasized at the momentous meeting on Blackfriars Bridge between Mordecai and Deronda is not prophecy but feeling. Deronda is attracted to the emaciated seer out of a "habitual disposition" of his to "meet rather than resist any claim on him in the shape of another's need; and this claim brought with it a sense of solemnity which seemed a radiation from Mordecai, as utterly nullifying his outward poverty and lifting him into authority as if he had been that preternatural guide seen in the universal legend, who suddenly drops his mean disguise and stands a manifest Power" (xl). What is significant in the meeting, as my thesis emphasizes, is what goes on in the minds of Daniel and Mordecai. The characters easily penetrate each other through empathy. Just as Deronda's itinerant sympathy finds lodging in Mirah and Gwendolen, it has also come to find a home in Mordecai. But Mordecai is greater than either Mirah or Gwendolen because he has the experience and the knowledge which one acquires through long suffering. He is qualified to teach Daniel that visions become inspiration when they derive from physical contact with humanity: "Visions are the creators and feeders of the world. I see, I measure the world as it is, which the vision will create anew. You are not listening to one who raves aloof from the lives of his fellows." This passage is important because it throws into relief Daniel's vague visions which do not derive from physical contact with humanity.

Mordecai's earnestness impresses Deronda because he is beginning to acquire experience through his contact with Mirah and Gwendolen. He subsequently tells the seer, "I feel with you--I feel strongly with you." But Mordecai insists that he must stop being vague. He ought to become something other than his old self: "You must be not only a hand to me, but a soul--believing my belief--being moved by my reasons--hoping my hope--seeing the vision I point to. . . you will take the sacred inheritance of the Jew" (xlii). To emancipate himself from his microcosm, Deronda must modify his thoughts and become a new man in the process. Mordecai has the capacity, which Daniel has not, of changing abstract thoughts into concrete images.[10]

His teaching reaches its climax when he tells Daniel that "you would remind me that I may be under an illusion--that the history of our people's trust has been full of illusion. . . . So it might be with my trust, if you would make it an illusion" (xl). This quotation supports the main tenet of my thesis that the shape of the character's world depends on the state of his mind. In his efforts to explain his use of symbolic imagery, Mordecai makes it clear that the fulfilment of his vision rests entirely on the human mind, not on any supernatural agent. For George Eliot failure is a mental attitude. The Idionic mind creates only illusions because its narrow desires prevent it from profiting from the store of human knowledge available to it. But the world of the Hieria, supported, as it is, by the experience and knowledge of the whole human race, cannot be illusory. Its flaws derive from human frailty and not from the claims that it makes on individuals. Mordecai's trust challenges Deronda to accept the burdens of being a Hieria, and he rightly considers the challenge as the major crisis of his life.

But Daniel is not converted. He is much too fond of his dream world to care for Mordecai's trust. But in spite of himself, his contact with the prophet has given him something new to think about. And as his thought changes, he too changes: "Why, we are the beginning of the ages, which can only be just by virtue of just judgments in separate human breasts--separate yet combined. Even steam-engines could not have got made without that condition, but must have stayed in the mind of James Watt" (xli). In his efforts to find a new belief, he touches on one of the most complex problems in George Eliot--the question of unity-in-separateness. The steam-engine is the author's example par excellence of how separate individual components can function as a unit.[11] When one becomes a Hieria his relationship with his community is similar to the relationship of steam-engine and water. Daniel uses the comparison to resolve his perplexity. The individual is both the "meeting point" of and "the new starting point" of ideas.[12] As a member of the human race, an individual is an inheritor of ideas which he has no power to reject, just as neither water nor steam-engine can reject each other. But for the continuity of the race, man must become an individual in order to originate new ideas from his individuality. Daniel's problem has been his inability to originate ideas because he has lost his individuality in his generality, and his recognition of the separateness of the individual in judgment is a significant turning point in his affairs; it brings him closer to Mordecai.

In spite of his moral gains, however, he cannot commit himself to any particular action. He is still ego-centred and finds it difficult to give up the idea that he is to become an English lord, who will have many privileges without special duties. But he comes to a total recognition when his mother tells him that he is a Jew. "If this revelation had been made to me before I knew you both," he tells Mordecai and Mirah, "I think my mind would have rebelled against it. Perhaps I should have felt then--'If I could have chosen, I would not have been a Jew'" (lxiii). He has something of his mother's nature in him, but through the influence of his mentors, he has been able to avoid his mother's error. His consciousness of his moral gains brings him to the knowledge which is the central motif of George Eliot's fictions:

> "It is you who have give shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning--the effect of brooding,

> passionate thoughts in many ancestors--thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather. Suppose the stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain, or one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind--the ancestral life would lie within them as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations, and the spell-bound habit of their inherited frames would be like a cunningly-wrought musical instrument, never played on, but quivering throughout in uneasy mysterious moanings of its intricate structure that, under the right touch, gives music. Something like that, I think, has been my experience. Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitutde--some social captainship which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize." (lxiii)

Here is an explanation of the basic assumption which is at the root of George Eliot's writing that true knowledge is a recognition of man's relationship to his inheritance as a member of the human race.[13] Deronda's psychological change coincides with a change in his fortunes. His wish to become "the heart and brain of a multitude" does not originate in a self-centred theory of life, but in his submissiveness to the human situation. In this submissiveness, which is no longer an excuse to indulge his natural penchant for diffuseness, he is a step closer to total identification with his Hieria. He has emancipated himself from his microcosm.

But his psychological gains notwithstanding, he still has an obstacle to overcome. Although Gwendolen plays a large role in his education, he is primarily attracted to her by some weakness of his, by that side of him which would have surrendered him to his mother, if Mirah and Mordecai had not intervened to rescue him. Like Alcharisi, Gwendolen loves to do what she likes; she is not conscious of the claims of the outside world. If Daniel succumbs to her wishes, he will have to return to his selfish hopes of becoming nothing better than an English gentleman. He has to make strong efforts to overcome his special feelings for Gwendolen who has come to depend entirely on him since the death of her husband. He confesses to himself "that a year ago, he would hardly have asked himself whether he loved her: the impetuous determining impulse which would have moved him would have been to save her from sorrow, to shelter her life for ever more from the dangers of loneliness, and carry out to the last the rescue he had begun in that monitary redemption of the necklace" (lxv). He is unable to make up his mind about her because of his natural habit of indecision. His sympathies, like his thoughts, are diffused. David Carroll points out, rather significantly, that Deronda's "disease of sympathy is the reason why he finds himself in relationship with Gwendolen and Mordecai."[14] The critic is, of course, concerned with the contrast which Gwendolen and Mordecai make with each other. But because of his education, Daniel is now in a position to emancipate himself from his cloying sympathy. "His judgment," we are told, is "no longer wondering in the mazes of impartial sympathy, but choosing, with the noble partiality which is man's best strength, the closer fellowship that makes sympathy practical" (lxiii).

He becomes convinced that physical separation from Gwendolen will strengthen her morally. General love inspires faith in human goodness, and this faith is what Gwendolen needs. In his last interview with her he tells her that "Now we can perhaps never see each other again. But our minds may get nearer" (lxix). Their separation is to be a guarantee of their resolve that they "will each be true/ To high allegiance, higher than our love."[15]

But he chooses Mirah because his personal love for her is capable of uniting his affection with duty. He has more spiritual affinity with her than with the rather turbulent Gwendolen, and his choice is a logical outcome of his internal and external experiences. Their marriage is rather a celebration of the Shemah or the principle of the divine unity which embraces "as its consequence the ultimate unity of mankind" (lxi). Deronda's subsequent mission to the East to revive Judaism is a mission to revive the passions which have given the world not only a great religion, but also a unifying hope in life. Viewed in this way, his mission will benefit both the Zionists and the Gentiles, the Mordecais and the Gwendolens. George Eliot repeatedly insists on human relationships as the basis for a beatific existence. Daniel's bold quest for a faith that gives organic form to human relationships is not only a logical outcome of his moral growth, but also an appropriate conclusion to George Eliot's search for a valid principle of life. Daniel's

Hieria can be identified with the whole moral universe.

Gwendolen and Grandcourt

To make Gwendolen and Grandcourt vital, George Eliot returns to the technique which she perfected in Middlemarch, the technique of wedding two young egoists for the purpose of their education. Surrounded always by an adoring mother, sisters, and servants, Gwendolen comes to believe that her pleasure is the most important thing in the world. "My plan," she says blandly, "is to do what pleases me" (vii). Her plan is sanctioned, in her mind, by a sincere belief that she is an exceptional person who must have an exceptional destiny. From this conception of herself, she creates a little world in which she is the only one that matters and in which her actions are governed entirely by her antipathies and inclinations. Her relationships with members of her family illustrate how she has made herself a victim of her antipathies. Because she does not like her step-father, she upbraids her mother for marrying him: "It would have been nicer if you had not" (iii), she advises. Again because she is disinclined to teach her half-sister Alice, she tells her mother, "It would be much better for her to be ignorant . . . it is her role, she would do it well." Through selfishness, she has lost her natural affection, and since feeling is the glue that binds one to one's fellow beings, loss of this faculty is synonymous with loss of one's essential humanity.

The essence of egoism lies in such a loss. The great difference between Gwendolen's world and Daniel Deronda's can be attributed to the fact that Daniel never loses his affections for members of his family, while Gwendolen never develops affection for those close to her. But she is not naturally devoid of affectionate feelings. She is rather a very complex individual whose capacity for feeling is eclipsed by a strong desire to dominate.

At the beginning of the novel, her actions are controlled by her Idionic self which claims special privileges. As a result of this claim, she rebels against "the restraints of family conditions." But the most significant achievement of this rebelliousness is to refuse giving her sister her lessons. Another privilege which she claims is that of queenship. As a queen of her little world, she is intolerant of any rivalry or opposition. Gradually her detestation for opposition degenerates into a morbid fear of any nature that is wider and larger than hers: "solitude in any wide scene impressed her with an undefined feeling of immeasurable existence aloof from her, in the midst of which she was helplessly incapable of asserting herself" (vi). By the same logic, she becomes liable "to fits of spiritual dread because she fears the mysterious knowledge that she cannot comprehend. Her fears confine her in her narrow microcosm because she lacks the wider knowledge that will emancipate her from her ego.

She has a morbid fear of death and love. She is petrified when she sees the picture of a "dead face", and she recoils from Rex's love-making "like a sea-anemone at the touch of a finger" (vii). Death represents the mystery of life over which she has no control whatsoever. But love is a supreme act of altruism in which one's ego merges with that of the beloved object. To be capable of love one must suppress one's ego. Gwendolen absorbs her own love in self-worship and therefore cannot share her affections with others. Deprived of love for others, she begins to think that others are created to supply her rather large demands. She is attracted to Rex because he fulfils a temporary need for a playmate: she is attracted to Grandcourt because he is the means by which "the dignities, the luxuries, the power of doing a great deal of what she likes to do" can be attained (xiii). Contemplating the narrowness of Gwendolen's world of inclination and antipathy, the narrator cannot help observing:

> Could there be a slenderer, more insignificant threat in human history than this consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant?--in a time, too, when ideas were with fresh vigour making armies of themselves, and the universal kinship was declaring itself fiercely: when women on the other side of the world would not mourn for the husbands and sons who died bravely in a common cause, and men stinted of bread on our side of the world heard of that willing loss and were patient: a time when the soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard, until their full sum made a new life of terror or of joy. (xi)[16]

The unity of Daniel Deronda lies in this important cross reference which shows the distance that separates Gwendolen's world from that of Daniel, for instance. The heroine's narrowness makes it impossible for her to see her lot in relationship with the lots of mankind in general; for this reason she is unable to generate the sympathetic feeling which ought to mediate between her microcosm and the macrocosm that envelops her. Later she is to be forced, by her circumstances, into the consciousness of a life larger than hers through contact with Daniel Deronda.

Meanwhile, it is her inclination to marry Grandcourt, although she knows that she is not in love with him. But she wavers when she has to make the important decision because her moral life or Hieria is revolted at the idea of a marriage without love. John P. Kearney notes that her perplexity is the result of a "ruptured identity that afflicts every George Eliot heroine in some way."[17] But her conflict does not stem, as in the case of Maggie Tulliver or Dorothea Brooke, from a tragic division between love and duty, but from a conflict of her Idione and Hieria. To help her make up her mind on a moral principle, the author brings her into contact with Mrs Glasher, who loves Grandcourt and has four children by him. Mrs Glasher appeals to Gwendolen, on the grounds of her love and on the grounds of human sympathy for her illegitimate children, not to marry Grandcourt. But the heroine fails completely to appreciate the moral implications of the appeal. She reacts to it just as she reacts to the picture of the dead face. "Gwendolen, watching Mrs Glasher's face while she spoke, felt a sort of terror: it was as if some ghastly vision had come to her in a dream" (xiv). She recoils from the knowledge which, in essence, opposes her queenly wishes. The idea that Grandcourt has dared to love someone other than her supreme self is an intolerable challenge to her conception of things. It is her pride, not her moral sense that is nettled: "There is nothing worth caring for," she declares. "I believe all men are bad, and I hate them." The egoist generalizes from a very little experience and withdraws into his microcosm when confronted with a serious moral problem.

Her little world, built around Grandcourt, shattered, she runs away to Leubronn where she takes to gambling, imagining herself the "empress of luck" (xv). The inveterate egoist often believes himself to be the favoured child of "chance" or "providence,"[18] and gambling is the usual means by which fortune crowns her favourite offspring. Gwendolen does not gamble for money, but to reassert her supremacy and to reassure herself that she is still the centre of a viable microcosm. "She had begun to believe in her luck, others had begun to believe in it: she had visions of being followed by a cortege who would worship her as a goddess of luck and watch her play as a directing augury" (i). But her concentration is broken by the appearance of Daniel on the scene. Her thought is arrested and she imagines that the new-comer is "measuring her and looking down on her as an inferior." Her Hieria is beginning to assert itself. This consciousness of someone imagining himself as her superior is the first symptom of a movement away from her ego. Significantly, she begins to lose her winnings as Daniel looks on.

Gwendolen's family fortunes are lost to gambling, and her faith in herself, as the queen of fortune is vigorously jolted. She momentarily loses "the implicit confidence that her destiny must be one of luxurious ease, where any trouble that occurred would be well clad and provided for" (ii). But to reassure herself that fortune cannot actually cut her off, she resorts to narcissism:

> She sat gazing at her image in the growing light, her face gathered a complacency gradual as the cheerfulness of the morning. Her beautiful lips curled into a more and more decided smile, till at last she took off her hat, leaned forward and kissed the cold glass which had looked so warm. How could she believe in sorrow? If it attacked her, she felt the force to crush it, to defy it, or run away from it, as she had done already. Anything seemed more possible than that she could go on bearing miseries, great or small. (ii)

Still under the firm control of her inclination, she looks to her image for consolation rather than seek help from the outside unknown world of the Daniel Derondas. Gwendolen kissing the mirror recalls the fable of Idione seeing only her pretty face in the lake. She, the perfect Idione, falls in love with herself and forgets the macrocosm that surrounds her. She pawns her turquoise necklace, inherited from her father, rather than seek monetary aid from her companions.

But Daniel Deronda retrieves the precious inheritance which he returns to her with an anonymous note: "A stranger who has found Miss Harleth's necklace returns it to her with the hope that she will not again risk the loss of it" (ii). The necklace is Gwendolen's vital link with her people and with history; her attempt to dispose of it is a selfishly arrogant effort to cut vital links with humanity.

Gwendolen refuses to accept what has happened to her; she continues to cling to the fond hope that she is still fortune's birthright and that somehow something will happen dramatically to save her from the humiliation of indigence. But such thoughts can only lead to misery. She is disenchanted upon return to her home at Offendene, because she sees the town--its railway station and the surrounding natural scenery--as Dorothea Brooke sees Lowick upon her return from her honeymoon, through the mirror of her personal lot:

> Gwendolen felt that the dirty paint in the waiting-room, the dusty decanter of flat water, and the texts in large letters calling on her to repent and be converted, were part of the dreary prospect opened by her family troubles; and she hurried away to the outer door looking towards the lane and fields. But here the very gleams of sunshine seemed melancholy, for the autumnal leaves and grass were shivering, and the wind was turning up the feathers of a cock and two croaking hens which had doubtless parted with their grown-up offspring and did not know what to do with themselves . . . (xxi)

It is Gwendolen, not the hens, who is at a loss what to do with herself. She sees herself in all nature and can, therefore, derive no relief from contacts with natural objects.

Disenchantment may only lead to dispersal of illusions when the disillusioned egoist develops an emotional, but disinterested attachment with something other than himself. Such affection will enable him to see his lot in relationship with the lots of others. Gwendolen fails to develop affection for others, and the more she is chastened by experience the more she clings to her ego, as a pet dog fawns on a hostile master. One of the means by which one can free onself from one's ego is to labour in the interest of others. But Gwendolen views all labour as a burden. We have seen that she cannot give lessons to her sister Alice. But even now that she is threatened with indigence, she cannot work as a governess because it is a situation in which she cannot do as she likes. And to live in a less expensive home is equally repugnant to her, as it makes her feel less important.

She prefers a job in which she will be glorified as a queen, and since she cannot be the empress of luck, she imagines she can be the queen of the stage. She soon constructs a new world in which she--now a celebrated opera singer, like Grisi--becomes the cynosure of admiring crowds. When, however, Klesmer tells her that she has no musical talents, her world collapses, and finding that being a singer is not synonymous with doing what one likes, she abandons her musical ambitions and regrets seeking the advice of Klesmer.

For George Eliot, music is the expression of a deeply felt thought,[19] which unites one with a larger world outside oneself. In Frankfort, the Hebrew liturgy moves Deronda like "the prayer which seeks for nothing special, but is a yearning to escape from the limitations of our own weakness and invocation of all Good to enter and abide with us" (xxxii). Gwendolen's desire to appropriate music for selfish ends contrasts with Deronda's or Mirah's rejection of music as a career. This is not to say that music is not a suitable career for men and women. Klesmer, for instance, is a professional musician, but his music is a felt expression of his soul. He is a musician before he is a careerist, and his music is not directed towards the applause of the crowd as is Gwendolen's. He tells Gwendolen that her music is expressive of "a puerile state of culture. . . . the passion and thought of people without any breadth of horizon. . ." (v). Gwendolen does not really love music; she wishes merely to exhibit her beautiful face on the stage, and music is a means by which she hopes to do that.

Disappointed over her new scheme to become the empress of the stage, she withdraws, as usual, into her Idione and blames others for her misfortunes. Her troubles, she reflects, have "all been caused by other people's disagreeable or wicked conduct, and there was really nothing pleasant to be counted on in the world" (xxiv). The knowledge that she has no musical talent has undermined her confidence in herself, and hence has alienated her from her best friend--herself. As a result she becomes a victim of the restlessness which comes to one "to whom distrust in herself and her good fortune has come as a sudden shock, like a rent across the path that she was treading carelessly." Trapped in her microcosm, Gwendolen, like Rosamond Vincy, succumbs to ennui and renders herself incapable of any action which may liberate her from a barren, fastidious egoism. Her crisis, instead of leading her to moral consciousness and regeneration, prepares her mind for the acceptance of Grandcourt on a principle that compromises her morally.

The desires of her Idione draw her in the direction of Grandcourt. Her subsequent engagement to the latter proves the contention of my thesis that the choice that a character makes is invariably dependent on her desires, rather than on external pressures:

> "Am I to understand that some one else is preferred?"
> Gwendolen, now impatient of her own embarrassment, determined to rush at the difficulty and free herself. She raised her eyes again and said with something of her former clearness and defiance, 'No'--wishing him to understand, "What then? I may not be ready to take you." There was nothing that Grandcourt could not understand which he perceived likely to affect his amour propre.
> Almost to her own astonishment, Gwendolen felt a sudden alarm at the image of Grandcourt finally riding away. What would be left her then? Nothing but the former dreariness. She likes him to be there . . . (xxvii)

Gwendolen's desires rather than her moral life, control the interview. She cannot open the vital question about Mrs Glasher, because her Idionic nature is already too much committed to Grandcourt and because "the question of love on her own part had occupied her scarcely at all in relation to Grandcourt." Instead of rejecting the suitor, she tells a story that is uppermost in her mind--the story of her disappointed queenship in the loss of her family fortunes. She thus plays into the hands of her calculating suitor who wants to enslave her because she is poor. He, as expected of him, proposes to rescue the heroine's family on the condition that Gwendolen marries him:

> "You accept what will make such things a matter of course?" said Grandcourt, without any new eagerness. "You consent to become my wife?" This time Gwendolen remained quite pale. Something made her rise from her seat in spite of herself and walk to a little distance. Then she turned and with her hands folded before her stood in silence.

Gwendolen, the gambler, defers to chance on important moral problems. Her silence is a means of purchasing time, and time, for her, is the handmaid of chance. Grandcourt knows what is going on in her mind and decides to force his advantage:

> "Do you command me to go?" No familiar spirit could have suggested to him more effective words.
>
> "No," said Gwendolen. She could not let him go: that negative was a clutch. She seemed to herself to be, after all, only drifted towards the tremendous decision:--but drifting depends on something besides the currents, when the sails have been set beforehand.

"Drifting" here should be associated with waiting for chance. It is the vehicle by which chance helps the heroine to obliterate moral consciousness, before committing herself to Grandcourt. But the merely passive form of yielding is not sufficient. She is given a second opportunity to make up her mind consciously:

> "You accept my devotion?" said Grandcourt, holding his hat by his side and looking straight into her eyes, without other movement. Their eyes meeting in that way seemed to allow any length of pause; but wait as long as she would, how could she contradict herself? What had she detained him for? He had shut out any explanation.
>
> "Yes," came as gravely from Gwendolen's lips as if she had been answering to her name in a court of justice.

But it is Gwendolen and not Grandcourt who has "shut out any explanation." F. R. Leavis significantly notes that the "yes" is a "true expression of her moral economy."[20] Although the response has not come without struggles, it is clear, nevertheless, that it is the logical result of her egoistic desires. She believes herself to be the empress of chance, and sees marriage with the rich man as an evidence that providence has marked her out for an extraordinary role. For this reason she assigns a large role to chance in the process of her engagement. However, chance, in George Eliot, is often the result of "the elaborate and complex system of causes" which has been working beyond the knowledge of characters.[21] Her egoism creates her chances.

After her engagement, she tells her mother jubilantly, "Everything is settled. You are not going to Sawyer's Cottage, I am not going to be inspected by Mrs Mompert, and everything is to be as I like" (xxvii). These are the thoughts which lie behind her "yes". With the revival of her natural vivacity comes also a hope for unlimited power. She thinks of her would-be husband "as a man over whom she was going to have indefinite power" (xxviii). She rationalizes her conduct on the score that her marriage is providentially ordained for the benefit of the Glashers. She will use her power to urge her husband "to the most liberal conduct towards Mrs Glasher's children." It is better for Mrs Glasher that Gwendolen rather than someone else marries Grandcourt. "He could have married her if he had liked; but he did not like." With such self-justifying thoughts, she explains away the moral arguments against her marrying him. But her attempts to explain her conduct to herself show that she is susceptible to morality and that she is not capable of dissociating herself completely from ethical questions.

But Grandcourt is a more consummate egoist than Gwendolen. His egoism, unlike Gwendolen's, is not penetrated by a fear of the unknown or by a moral conscience. He is thoroughly vegetative and his thoughts move languidly "like the circlets one sees in a dark pool continually dying out and continually started again by some impulse from below the surface" (xxviii). This is a rather poetic way of describing how a mind cloyed with passions of cruelty can be paralyzed by its own secretions. An inheritor of large fortunes, he has gradually developed a fastidious taste for cruelty from habits of uncontrolled self-indulgence. Having no active occupation, he learns to torture others for his own entertainment. Through a habitual indulgence in cruelty he comes to lose his affections, just as Gwendolen loses hers in the worship of her beauty. It is ironic, but consistent with his nature, that he should be attracted to Gwendolen because he knows that she cannot love him. He will get more entertainment from torturing a pretty girl who does not love him. He gets more pleasure

> out of this notion than he could have done out of winning a girl of whom he was sure that she had a strong inclination for him personally. . . . He had no taste for a woman who was all tenderness to him, full of petitioning solicitude and willing obedience. He meant to be master of a woman who would have liked to master him, and who perhaps would have been capable of mastering another man. (xxviii)

He is a cynic who is beyond moral regeneration, and Gwendolen completely satisfies his image of a woman to be enslaved; she too is proud and hates "a man who went down on his knees, and came fawning on me."

In wedding Gwendolen to Grandcourt, the author exploits, for ironic intensity, the antithesis of two natures that are inherently different, although sharing some minor, superficial interests. For Gwendolen, nemesis starts, even before the wedding, with a questioning terror. Before her contact with Mrs Glasher, she had never seriously been concerned with the question of right and wrong in relation to her actions. Her dictum had been to do what she liked, but now a new dimension has been added to her life: "It was new to her that a question of right or wrong in her conduct should rouse her terror" (xxviii).

As a wedding present, Grandcourt promises his wife a family diamond necklace, which he had originally given to Mrs Glasher. The diamonds arrive on her wedding day with an accompanying letter from her rival:

> "These diamonds, which were once given with ardent love to Lydia Glasher, she passes on to you. You have broken your word to her, that you might possess what was hers. . . . The man you have married has a withered heart. His best young love was mine; you could not take that from me when you took the rest. . . I am the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine." (xxxi)

Gwendolen's wrong-doing is not that she marries Grandcourt, but that she marries him without love. For George Eliot, a relationship based on love has a more valid claim on the individual than the one based only on a legal marriage from which the affections are expelled.[22] From the author's point of view, Mrs Glasher, who is in love with Grandcourt and has had four children by him, has a better title to the jewels, which to her are a symbol of her love and motherhood.

Because Gwendolen has a moral sense and because she is capable of thinking of others, Mrs Glasher's letter affects her greatly. The coveted jewellery, instead of becoming the symbol of her new social status as the empress of Grandcourt and chance, becomes ironically what serving Mrs Mompert as a governess is to her--"a Mumbojumbo" (xxviii). She is seized by a "spasm of terror" after reading the letter which turns the diamonds into "poisoned gems" that permeate her whole being. When her husband enters her room she suffers a nervous shock, screaming "again and again with hysterical violence." It is interesting to note that it is the mind of the heroine which transforms the necklace into a bugbear, just as it transforms the turquoise one redeemed by Daniel Deronda into a moral force. Her reaction to Mrs Glasher's letter is important to my thesis. If she did not think as she did, the letter would have meant nothing to her and the story of the novel would have been quite different. At the Abbey, she consciously refuses to wear the diamonds and the consequent dialogue that ensues between her and her husband indicates the extent of her mental anguish:

> Grandcourt stood with his back to the fire and looked at her as she entered.
> "Am I altogether as you like?" she said, speaking rather gaily. . .
> "No." said Grandcourt.
> Gwendolen felt suddenly uncomfortable, wondering what was to come. . .
> "Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, the pause lasting till she could bear it no longer. "How am I to alter myself?"
> "Put on the diamonds," said Grandcourt looking straight at her with his narrow glance.
> Gwendolen paused in her turn, afraid of showing any emotion, and feeling that nevertheless there was some change in her eyes as they met his. But she was obliged to answer, and said as indifferently as she could, "Oh, please not, I don't think diamonds suit me."
> "What you think has nothing to do with it," said Grandcourt, his sotto voce imperiousness seeming to have an evening quietude and finish, like his toilet. "I wish you to wear the diamonds." (xxxv)

Grandcourt is so self-assured that he has no need to quarrel or raise his voice. It is this attitude that lends an evening charm to his cruelty. It is a refined cynical form of cruelty that makes a mockery of human emotions. Gwendolen is forced to yield to an egoism that is far stronger than hers: "He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his," she says to herself, as she opens the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. "It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else is there for me? I will not say to the world 'Pity me.'" What normally gives egoism greater intensity is the egoist's feeling of alienation from the world. Gwendolen's suffering is made double by her sense of alienation from herself also: "her confidence in herself and her destiny had turned into remorse and dread; she trusted neither herself nor her future." The scene again stresses what goes on in the character's mind.

Gwendolen is remorseful and in order to attract Daniel's sympathy she wears the necklace which he had redeemed at Leubronn on her wrist. She says to Daniel, now her mentor, "You must tell me then what to think and what to do; else why did you not let me go on doing as I liked, and not minding? If I had gone on gambling I might have won again, and I might have got not to care for anything else. You would not let me do that. Why shouldn't I do as I like, and not mind? Other people do" (xxxvi). The journey to moral regeneration is always an up and down one. In marrying Grandcourt, Gwendolen lapses from the progress that she makes at Leubronn. Now she recognizes that she has to accept some moral responsibility if she is to appeal again to Daniel's sympathy. She deliberately blames Daniel for making her morally conscious in the first place. But her confessor knows that she is not morally bankrupt, because she has a conscience that is sensitive to wrong and right. He knows that her lot will improve if she can emancipate herself from her microcosm:

> Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action--something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot.

Delight in something other than the supreme "self" mediates between the ego and the larger world. Gwendolen's narcissist tendency prevents her from taking any interest in the larger world that surrounds her. Earlier, when she would not hear Mirah's singing because she herself is only middling in music, Daniel had told her that excellence should be admired for the sake of mankind. A disinterested admiration of what is good "encourages one about life generally: it shows the spiritual wealth of the world" (xxxvi). However, Gwendolen's continued recognition of Daniel as a superior human being is a sign that she can be regenerated morally when this recognition is purged of the selfish element that is attached to it.

But Gwendolen's desire to confide in Daniel Deronda is not enough. She must face the consequences of her actions. Unconsciously, she has been deriving comfort from the feeling that her meeting with Mrs Glasher remains a secret. It is for this reason that she has willingly submitted to indignities from her husband. But her submission ought to derive from a sincere feeling of remorse rather than from a selfish hope. When her husband reveals that he has all along known of her little secret, she collapses. The revelation, "like a sharp knife-edge drawn across her skin" shatters the illusion on which her microcosm is built; she is plunged into disenchantment:

> Already she was undergoing some hardening effect from feeling that she was under eyes which saw her past actions solely in the light of her lowest motives. She lived back in the scenes of her courtship, with the new bitter consciousness of what had been in Grandcourt's mind--certain now, with her present experience of him, that he had had a peculiar triumph in conquering her damp repugnance, and that ever since their marriage he had a cold exultation in knowing her fancied secret. Her imagination exaggerated every tyrannical impulse he was capable of. (xlviii)

Gwendolen's reflections underscore the point of my thesis that the character in George Eliot is often a victim of his own thoughts. But in these speculations, Gwendolen is only being unfair to her husband, whose aim in revealing the secret is to engage his wife's proud egoism on his side against Lush and Mrs Glasher. But the revelation is morally necessary. Open confession of sin is a primary step towards regeneration in George Eliot. Gwendolen's frustration, though understandable, shows that she is still a victim of her Idione. After the scene, she does what only the supreme egoist can do--

begins to meditate the death of her antagonist so as to free herself from moral responsibility: "What release, but death? Not her own death. Gwendolen was not a woman who could easily think of her own death as a near reality, or front for herself the dark entrance on the untried and invisible. It seemed more possible that Grandcourt should die" (xlviii). But once more the thought of Deronda saves her from this total lapse into selfishness. She sends for her mentor, and as a preparation for his coming, consciously puts on black garments in an effort to cover her beauty--the source of her egoism.[23] Subsequently, she confesses to Daniel, "I am afraid of everything. I am afraid of getting wicked. Tell me what I can do" (xliii).

But Grandcourt never undergoes moral change because he cannot feel. He is always devising new methods of cruelty, and now to stifle the spirit of rebellion which he is beginning to notice in his wife, he proposes a Mediterranean cruise. The cruise is the author's most ambitious attempt to dramatize egoism in total moral and physical isolation. Their yachting boat represents a narrow microcosm which they have made for themselves in contrast with the vastness of nature represented, in this case, by the expansive Mediterranean. Their cruising in a closed yacht throws into relief Daniel Deronda's rowing on the Thames in an open boat. His mind grows as large as the river and he can see the suffering Mirahs. But the minds of Gwendolen and Grandcourt become as oppressively narrow as their closed boat; they see nobody but themselves, and the sight urges them to indulge in mutual hatred.

To Gwendolen, this "Moslem paradise" of yachting in the Mediterranean is not a celebration of her much coveted queenship, but a humiliation which intensifies the agony of "moral repulsion and cowed resistance, which, like an eating pain intensifying into torture, concentrates the mind in a poisonous misery" (liv). In her confined situation, she has abolutely no outlet for her emotions; her mind has never had any large interests which can absorb her sorrows. Her only window to the outside world is Grandcourt, and the image of the world, presented through him, is the distorted one of torture and unrelievable misery.

When they change from a yacht to an open sail-boat, Gwendolen's habitual fear of open places is revived, and she again begins to wish the death of her tormentor. As they put to sea, she cries, "God help me!" Her spontaneous cry is a yearning to lean on something greater than herself in the face of the vastness of creation. It is a surrender of her proud will to something ouside herself. Although she has not abandoned her egoism, she can no longer imagine herself the favourite daughter of fortune. Meanwhile, Grandcourt falls into the sea and drowns. He dies a victim of his own egoistic desires; he is beyond redemption, because he never loved. But Gwendolen assumes moral responsibility for his death. She is hysterical and feels that she killed him by her wicked thoughts. "I did kill him by my thoughts," she tells Deronda. Her sense of guilt is wrought on by remorse. She feels that she could have thrown a rope to save him, if her wicked wishes had not stopped her from doing so. Deronda, however, interprets her remorse as "the precious sign of a recoverable nature; . . .the culmination of that self-disapproval which had been the awakening of a new life within her; it marked her off from the criminals whose only regret is failure in securing their evil wish" (lvi).[24] Although her remorse is undoubtedly genuine and is a logical outcome of her experience, her wish for the death of her antagonist remains a selfish way of resolving a moral conflict. But the main gain from the incident is that she comes to a true knowledge of the nature of her egoism. "I broke my promise. I meant to get pleasure for myself, and it all turned to misery," she tells Deronda. "I wanted to make my gain out of another's loss--you remember?--it was like roulette--and the money burnt into me." This recognition is a significant turning point in her affairs. She has come to understand that life is not a game of chance in which she is the fortunate empress of luck. Afterwards she insists on confessing everything to Daniel. Open confession has a cleansing effect, because it forces the repentant character to abhor what has been previously wrong in him.

But Gwendolen's regeneration is not yet complete. Like many an egoist of George Eliot's fictional world, her conversion depends on the relationship between her and her confessor. She has great expectations from Daniel. "You must not forsake me," she pleads. "I will bear any penance. I will lead any life you tell me. But you must not forsake me. You must be near . . ." (lvii). She has fallen in love with her mentor. The sentiment of love is, of course, a noble one. Her falling in love is a significant moral gain. It shows that she has regained the feeling the loss of which has alienated her from mankind. But for love to act as a moral agent, it must become objective. This kind of love calls for the renunciation of the loved object. Gwendolen selfishly clings to her love. She is shattered when she learns that her confessor loves another woman: "I said I should be forsaken," she cries agonizedly. "I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken" (lxix). This is a relapse into the passion of egoism. The loss of the beloved object is necessary for the completion of her education. She cannot become completely regenerate until she exchanges her narrow world for the larger one which she has always feared. Her clinging to Daniel may, in fact, be viewed as another effort of her egoism to run away from the macrocosm that it cannot encompass. The narrator says that the knowledge of Daniel's mission to the Jews of Palestine brings a crisis to her life: "She was for the first time feeling the pressure of a vast mysterious movement, for the first time being dislodged from her supremacy in her own world, and getting a sense that her horizon was but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving" (lxix).[25] In their last interview, Deronda tells her that "other duties will arise from seeing one's life as a debt" (lxiii). Gwendolen is eventually forced to come to terms with the wide, external world which she has always feared. Her letter to Deronda on his wedding day shows that she has abandoned the egoism which has imprisoned her in a narrow microcosm: "I have remembered your words--that I may live to be one of the best of women, who make others glad that they were born. . . . If it ever comes true, it will be because you helped me" (lxx). The significance of these words is that Gwendolen is approaching Deronda's consciousness, and consciousness of a wider nature is not only the logical outcome of the drama of Daniel Deronda, but also of all the novels of George Eliot. Both Daniel and Gwendolen reach their Hieria through the experience gained from contact with human suffering.

Gwendolen's resolution of her conflict through the moral influence of an external agent relevantly stresses the point that my thesis is making that the character in George Eliot is not allowed to live in moral isolation. Henry James's heroines, for instance, face their moral problems alone. Isabel Archer refuses outside help and returns to Rome alone to confront her husband. Maggie Verver sends her father away so that she can reconstruct her life alone in the solitude of her mind. Any attempt to resolve one's conflict alone in George Eliot, as my thesis has shown, always leads to isolation in a narrow microcosm. For this reason, disenchanted characters always need the assistance of the moral world that surrounds them.

The reader must have by now noticed a common pattern in all the novels that I have been discussing. Because of their thoughts, the characters start life as Idiones isolated in narrow microcosms. Those, like Adam, Arthur, Maggie, Romola, Dorothea, Daniel, Gwendolen, and others, who gain in experience and knowledge modify their thoughts and are consequently regenerated and attain their Hieria. Some perish in moral ignorance and others are exiled. In the remaining part of the thesis, I shall examine why the egoist fails in his attempts to isolate himself in a little world.

Part II

Moral Dynamics

The reader of Part I of my thesis must have wondered why in George Eliot's novels the egoist's attempt to carve out a private world for himself always ends in tragedy, or why the George Eliot character is always confronted with problems of moral relationships. I shall now attempt to answer these questions by showing how the individual, as well as society, is controlled by a moral law that is inherent in man. For George Eliot, the evolution of moral consciousness is the starting point of civilization, and of the human society. It is especially a phenomenon that distinguishes man's world from that of wild nature. In a letter to John Morley, she argues that "in the moral evolution we have 'an art which does mend nature.'"[1] She has no doubts that the wellbeing of mankind depends entirely on the moral order, which alone regulates human relationships.

The difference between George Eliot and James Joyce, for instance, is that for the former moral relationships are more important than mental solitude, whereas for Joyce it is vice versa. While Joyce's subjectively conceived character receives no help from the outside world, George Eliot's affects and is affected permanently by society. Dorothy Van

Ghent significantly notes that Joyce's technique of the "interior monologue" is the sensitive formal representation of mental solitude.[2] In A Portrait of the Artist, for example, Joyce is concerned with the associative patterns arising in Stephen's mind from infancy to adolescence only as they show the "dialectical process by which a world-shape evolves in the mind."[3] But George Eliot is concerned to show how the associative patterns arising in the character's mind are related to a moral law which governs both the individual and his society.

At the beginning of each novel of George Eliot, the characters are isolated in narrow microcosms because they are unconscious of the moral law that operates within and without them. The moral order has a simultaneous origin in both the individual and in society. The process is complex and is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is enough to observe here that it is one of the conditions which, according to George Eliot, "society has inherited from the past," and is "but the manifestation of inherited internal conditions in the human beings" who compose society; "the internal conditions and the external" are related to each other as the "organism and its medium."[4] B. J. Paris rightly notes that George Eliot, Spencer, Darwin, and Lewes believed that the moral order has both an inward existence in individuals and an outward existence in society, and that the interactions of man and medium result in moral progress.[5] The quotations from Paris and George Eliot show why the moral law is so binding in George Eliot. Moral feeling, once developed, tends to flow from the individual to society and vice versa; it is very difficult to stop its flow. It is interesting to note that the perplexities of the heroes and heroines of George Eliot often arise from futile efforts to check the free flow of the stream of morality. Adam Bede, Maggie Tulliver, Esther Lyon, Dorothea Brooke, Casaubon, Lydgate, and Gwendolen Harleth all get into trouble when they attempt to modify their natural spirit of fellow-feeling by self-centred ideas of what life should be. Fortunately, as soon as the moral feeling or sense is fully developed in a regenerate character it makes a tradition, and the character seldom returns to his earlier condition, because he has become conscious of a higher way of life. It is for this reason that he necessarily becomes a moral agent. "The growth of higher feeling within us," reflects the narrator of Adam Bede, "is like the growth of faculty, bringing with it a sense of added strength: we can no more wish to return to a narrower sympathy, than a painter or a musician can wish to return to his cruder manner, or a philosopher to his less complete formula" (A.B. liv).

At the root of George Eliot's conception of the artistic form, as a complex system of relationships,[6] is what I call moral dynamics or the idea of an emotional-intellectual force that links man to man. Whether the author develops her stories by the use of antithesis or analogy, the connecting pattern is always a moral one. Maggie Tulliver is distinguished from Tom Tulliver, Felix Holt from Harold Transome, Daniel Deronda from Gwendolen Harleth, Dorothea Brooke from Rosamond by degrees of moral consciousness. At the same time, it is through moral judgment that we see Bulstrode as the analogue of Raffles; Harold Transome as that of lawyer Jermyn, or Tito Melema in a parallel relationship with the Florentine politicians. In what one does or thinks, one is always relating to people in a way that is more or less moral. Gordon Haight underscores the function of moral dynamics in George Eliot when he argues that in the author's philosophy "it is fundamental that every human act however insignificant has an effect for good or ill on ourselves and on others of whom we are perhaps not even aware."[7] The spirit of fellow-feeling which exists inside and outside the individual is nothing but a stream of morality which connects all members of a community.

As soon as a character becomes morally conscious, he is no longer an egoist isolated in a narrow microcosm. I shall now consider the various ways by which moral dynamics integrates people in George Eliot's fictional world.

Scenes of Clerical Life, Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, and Silas Marner

In George Eliot's earlier novels most characters live in isolated microcosms because of their limited sensibilities.

To integrate them in society they have to be made sensitive to the moral law that operates within and without them. This is accomplished by a revival of their sensibilities through a dramatization of death, suffering, and love. At the beginning of the story of "Amos Barton", the characters conspicuously live in separate worlds. The congregation of Shepperton Church laugh at their pastor for his lack of common sense. On his own part, Rev Barton is convinced that he "held high opinions a little too far-sighted and profound to be crudely and suddenly communicated to ordinary minds" (S.C.L. "Amos Barton",ii). Because of the way they think, they develop insensitivity to love, and hence to the moral feeling which binds man to man. To bring them to a recognition of this law, Milly's death is deliberately protracted. The effect on the characters is dramatic; they at once recognize their common inheritance in suffering and therefore come to sympathize with each other. In this case moral dynamics uses death and suffering to bring characters to their Hieria. An external agent is used often, in George Eliot, to bring about moral consciousness in hardened minds.

Suffering is also used in "Janet's Repentance" to bring the morally segregated Tryanites and Dempsterians together. There is in the story a parallel between Janet Dempster's suffering and Rev Tryan's. Both have bodily pains: Janet's from the torments of a brutal husband, and Tryan's from consumption. Regeneration begins for Janet when she overhears the vicar ask a dying member of his congregation to pray for him so that he can have strength to overcome the "weakness to shrink from bodily pain." The confession has an immediate moral impact on Janet, who has taken to drinking to avoid consciousness of her own pain. "Mr Tryan had his deeply-felt troubles, then?" she reflects. "Mr Tryan, too, like herself, knew what is was to tremble at a foreseen trial --to shudder at an impending burthen, heavier than he felt able to bear?" The suffering mind of Rev Tryan thus arouses sympathy in the equally suffering soul of Janet. The experience of sharing in sorrow is quite new to Janet and it has a transcendental effect. "The most brilliant deed of virtue," observes the narrator, "could not have inclined Janet's goodwill towards Mr Tryan so much as this fellowship in suffering" (S.C.L. "Janet's Repentance", xii). Subsequently, a vital relationship develops between the two sufferers. And as this relationship grows, Janet cannot help seeing that the vicar has, in spite of great pain, been working for others and denying himself the luxury of self-pitying, while she has, on the contrary, been indulging in selfish complaints. These thoughts help her to overcome her drinking habits and to take on herself the moral task of helping others to overcome their own frailties. Her regeneration is appropriately attributed to the "blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another" (xix). Through the influence of Janet, the Dempstrians come to see the Tryans as fellow human beings, in spite of their evangelical doctrine. Like Milly's, Rev Tryan's death is also protracted in order to induce sympathy in the hardened hearts of the people of Milby. Sympathy best describes the "truth of feeling" which George Eliot claims to be "the only universal bond of union."[8] The sympathetic impulse, which is natural to man, lends force to the stream of morality.[9] Although innate in man, the impulse is nourished by human experience and knowledge.[10] The experience which, for George Eliot, is the source of the greatest sympathy is that of suffering. B. J. Paris notes that the author "viewed suffering as a part of man's education which leads him from his innate subjectivity to objectivity--that is, to an awareness of the interior life of others."[11] But the mind of a rustic, like Janet's, is incapable of using its experience unless there is an external event like death or suffering to force it into a communion with other minds.

Adam, Hetty, and Arthur are also isolated in narrow microcosms as the drama of Adam Bede begins. But since the character in George Eliot is developed through a system of moral relationships, the characters must be forced to become morally conscious. The most interesting use of death to bring about moral consciousness, in George Eliot, is the case of Adam Bede. Adam is alienated from his alcoholic father. But through the influence of his mother, his sympathy for his father is revived. He then hears a smart but mysterious rap on the entrance gate to their home, like a willow end striking the door. The rapping on the door immediately reminds him of the story he has heard from his mother about someone dying who mysteriously raps on the door. The memory intensifies his sympathy for his father, and he begins to shudder at the idea of his death. But in the morning, his father's corpse is discovered among willows in a brook. Adam associates his father's death with the omen and blames himself for thinking harshly of his father at the very moment that he is dying in water: "This was what the omen meant, then! And the grey-haired father, of whom he had thought with a sort of hardness a few hours ago, as certain to live to be a thorn in his side, was perhaps even then struggling with that watery death! This was the first thought that flashed through Adam's conscience" (A.B. iv). He shares in his father's suffering by sympathetically reliving his death agonies. The suffering purifies his emotions, and he becomes a moral agent.

The importance of the scene is not Adam's superstition but his growth in sympathy. The mind of a peasant often moves in concrete images, and the rapping on the door is his method of explaining to himself the moral force of a mind impinging on another mind through the mediation of sympathy. Adam, as a moral animal, cannot remain isolated in a narrow microcosm. He cannot help thinking sympathetically of his father, and his imaginative sympathy represents his father rapping on the door of his hardened mind, trying to enter. The incident becomes for him a militant moral force, which brings him into sympathetic relationships with the erring Arthurs and Hettys. It is through his subsequent influence that Hayslope becomes socially and morally integrated, as we saw in Part 1 of this thesis.

Arthur is isolated from the moral world by his illicit love affair with Hetty. His moral sense is not awakened by Adam's warnings that his less than honest relationship with Hetty will bring harm to him and the community. But the suffering of Hetty in jail brings to him, in an overwhelming manner, a consciousness of the moral implications of his actions. He suddenly realizes that his actions have brought disintegration. Partly to allow himself time to regenerate and partly to give Hayslope opportunity to restore its moral balance, he opts for voluntary exile: "One of my reasons for going away," he tells Adam, "is, that no one else may leave Hayslope--may leave their home on my account. I would do anything, there is no sacrifice I would not make, to prevent any further injury to others through my--through what has happened" (A.B., xlvii).

Hetty too has to learn through suffering that she cannot be isolated morally. Early in the novel, she refuses to be morally integrated in society. "Why can't you let me be?" (xv) she asks Dinah. She kills her illegitimate child and is driven away from the society of men and women to seek compassion among beasts. Her lonely wandering in the marshy fields of Warwickshire dramatizes the complete isolation of one who has severed the cord that connects one with humanity at large. In her agony she is forced to become conscious of the benefits which she has received through the mediation of a law that she has never cared to understand. She now remembers, with regret, the social privileges which she has forfeited: "the familiar fields, the familiar people, the Sundays and holidays with their simple joys of dress and feasting--all the sweets of her young life rushed before her now, and she seemed to be stretching her arms towards them across a great gulf" (xxxvii). In the end when she finds herself in jail, she can only shriek, "Oh, Dinah, won't nobody do anything for me?" (xlv) This is a far cry from her ealier demand to be left alone. Through a harsh experience her insensitive mind has come to seek the aid of humanity.

In The Mill on the Floss, both Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's are microcosms emotionally separated from their past. The Tullivers and Dodsons are insensitive to anything except material possessions. In order to bring moral consciousness to the communities, George Eliot creates Maggie Tulliver, who is full of the affections of love--a virtue significantly absent from Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's. In fact The Mill on the Floss is conceived symbolically to show how the flow of the Floss is related to the stream of human love that flows within Maggie. Its story begins very significantly with the narrator by the bank of the river and psychologically projecting herself outwards until the flow of her love merges with the river current: "How lovely the little river is, with its dark changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank and listen to its placid voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving" (Bk.I,i). The scene establishes the tone and moral pattern of the novel. Maggie shares in the narrator's feeling for the river, and her role, like that of the river which she loves so dearly, is to be deaf and loving. She has to be "deaf" to the dreary materialism of St Ogg's, but loving in her relationship with everyone, in order to bring the communities under the bond of the moral law.

But merely being loving is not enough. Her role requires that her sympathies should be developed so that she can bring salvation to the community. In order to prepare her for the sacrifice she has to make, she is introduced to Thomas à Kempis who, in the novel, represents the external moral order which is made up of the moral streams of individuals who lived before her. Eventually, Dorlcote Mill and St Ogg's reject Maggie, but they cannot reject the sacrifice which she makes. The inscription on her tomb, "In their death they were not divided" (Conclusion), shows that the community has become conscious of something other than mere materialism. It has recovered its emotional life and can become once more morally integrated with its past and present.

Also at the beginning of Silas Marner, the reader is confronted with two worlds that have nothing whatsoever to do with each other. Silas does not want human contact. He has cursed his God--his moral principle--and has exiled himself voluntarily from his native land in order to live a lonely life in an alien land. Although morally and emotionally insensitive, he cannot successfully evade the moral law. Moral dynamics has to apply its force from the outside. Eppie comes in through the door which he has left open. In order to revive his emotional life, she has first to revive his memory. At first he confuses Eppie's golden hair with his lost gold, but as his memory improves, he begins to associate the hair with that of "his little sister come back to him in a dream" (S.M., xii). Soon he is bold enough to touch the still mysterious hair, and with the touch comes the revival of emotion and thought. He trembles "with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold--that the gold had turned into the child" (xiv). It is to be expected that his first attempt at thinking must be confused. His memory of things is still hazy. Soon Eppie begins to remind him of home and of the past: "as the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory; as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied, in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness" (xiv). This is an interesting presentation of memory effecting unity between the present and the past by stirring a character's native sensibilities.

With his memory, as well as emotional life, revived, Silas is ready to be reintegrated into society. Eppie's moral and physical needs bring him into contact with the Rainbow inn, the Godfreys, the Nancys, the Winthrops, and so forth. He refuses, after his social and moral integration to return to the loneliness of his microcosm.

Nancy Lammeter is, in a limited sense, the Eppie of Godfrey Cass. Like Silas, Godfrey cannot, without the mediation of a tender love, reconcile himself to the moral world from which he has become alienated because of a dissolute life of "low passion" and "delusion". Nancy's dramatized beauty and orderliness are the means by which the moral force reaches his mind and reconciles him to society.

I have been trying to show how George Eliot dramatizes death, suffering, and love to instil morality in insensitive minds. Becoming morally conscious is particularly relevant to my thesis because it makes it impossible for characters, in George Eliot's fictional worlds, to isolate themselves successfully in narrow microcosms.

Romola, Felix Holt, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda

The characters in George Eliot's later novels are much more complex than those we have been discussing. Some, like Dorothea Brooke, Romola, and Daniel Deronda, have ready sympathies and can easily project themselves into others. They do not need the dramatization of love, death, and suffering to develop their moral faculties. Others, like Tito, Mrs Transome, Harold, and Bulstrode, are less morally sensitive, but sophisticated. Far from being overawed by death Tito, Mrs Transome, and Bulstrode wish to profit from the deaths of their enemies. But since in George Eliot the character, whether he likes it or not, is always confronted with conflicts of a moral nature, the Bulstrodes and Titos have to be forced to accept the moral order through the agency of social necessity or importunate memory. But in the later novels, as in the earlier ones, the characters live in isolated microcosms and are only brought into vital contact with society through the operation of moral dynamics.

In Romola, the world of the heroine is vastly different from that of Savonarola. Romola lives in a pagan world in which the frate's religious beliefs are mocked. On the other hand, the frate regards Romola's paganism as a sin. In spite of their beliefs, they are brought together because they are morally sensitive and intuitively share the same concern for the community. Romola's sensitivity to the moral sense is dramatized in her response to Savonarola's appeal. She is arrested by the personality of the frate when she tries to run away from her husband: "She spoke, as if the words were being wrung from her, still looking on the ground. 'My husband. . .he is not. . .my love is gone!'" What is dramatized in the scene is moral dynamics operating like an electric current on a sensitive mind:

> Romola felt herself surrounded and possessed by the glow of his passionate faith. The chill doubts all melted away; she was subdued by the sense of something unspeakably great to which she was being called by a strong being who roused a new strength within herself. In a voice that was like a low, prayerful cry, she said--
>
> "Father, I will be guided. Teach me! I will go back." (R. xl)

This is one of the many instances in which a morally sensitive mind is dramatized in the process of influencing an equally morally sensitive mind. It proves my contention at the beginning of Part II of this thesis that the moral stream is within and without the individual. In the scene Romola's internal moral stream mingles with the stream that flows from the outside world.

The heroine is particularly susceptible to Savonarola's moral influence. Proud of her classical backgrounds and egoistic assumption that "there could be no law for her but the law of her affections" (xxxvi), she has only contempt for the frate's "monkish superstition." But when commanded by the electrified voice of the frate to kneel before the cross of the religion she so much despises, she "fell on her knees, and in the very act a tremor came over her; in the renunciation of her proud erectness, her mental attitude seemed changed, and she found herself in a new state of passiveness" (xv). In spite of her pride, she finds herself sharing in the moral experience of others. Later, through sympathy with the frate for his suffering, she comes to identify her world with his. She reflects that she and the frate have something in common. Both have loved and sought the most perfect thing; both have beheld themselves fail. The goal of moral dynamics is to force characters to recognize "the sameness of the human lot."

Tito thinks that he can live without the moral law. Partly because of his treacheries Florence is divided into little microcosms. His denial of his adoptive father disturbs the moral equilibrium of the community and ultimately brings disaster to Tito and the Florentines. Moral dynamics forces the individual to recognize interdependence as the only way of life. By selfishly denying Baldassarre's legitimate claims on him, Tito puts himself in a state of war with the moral law. The drama of Romola is based on a conflict between the denial of the moral principle by Tito and its assertion by the nature of existence. Vice is not the opposite of morality but its counterfeit. When Tito betrays his adoptive father, he unconsciously realizes that he has undermined the moral basis on which his own existence rests. Since he cannot exist in a moral vacuum, he has to counterfeit morality, by inventing lies as a replacement for what he has destroyed. He lies to Romola and Bardo about Baldassarre and about his possessions. But when Bardo, in response to his lies, innocently remarks, "Five hundred ducats! Ah, more than a man's ransom!" he finds that he cannot be really insensitive to the moral law. Unconsciously he blames himself for not redeeming his poor adoptive father with the wealth that really belongs to the man. Bardo's unwitting remarks send a shock vibrating through him and he gives "a slight, almost imperceptible start, and opened his long dark eyes with questioning surprise at Bardo's blind face, as if his words--a mere phrase of common parlance, at a time when men were often being ransomed from slavery or imprisonment--had had some special meaning for him" (R. vi). Bardo represents the moral world and his generalized statement about the world of Florence, forces a stream of morality to flood Tito, who immediately becomes aware that his counterfeit morality will not do. The relationship between him and the Bardos, he realizes, cannot really be independent of his past relationship with Baldassarre. But he is too weak to accept the moral consequences of his actions. To get Romola, he has to be consistent in counterfeiting morality. He succeeds momentarily.

But he cannot flout the moral law for long. By the principle of moral dynamics Baldassarre, whose existence he has denied, is brought into Florence to confront him with his physical presence. He however persists in the denial. "Some madman, surely" (xxii), he says of his father. But unfortunately for him, the moral law operates within as well as without the individual. He finds that he cannot wish away Baldassarre any more than he can wish away his own conscience. The presence of the supposedly dead parent is morally embarrassing. Soon he becomes the victim of his own perversion. Ironically, the fear that his wife will become alienated from him if she discovers his lies about his father "caused him to feel an alienation already begun between them--caused him to feel a certain repulsion towards a woman from whose mind he was in danger" (xxvii). By the same ironic twist, Romola is, in turn, disconcerted about the fear that has suddenly taken possession of her husband and makes him cover his senstive skin with an iron coat: "This fear--this heavy armour. I can't help shuddering as I feel it under my arm. I could fancy it a story of enchantment--that some malignant fiend had changed your sensitive human skin into a hard shell. It seems so unlike my bright, light-hearted Tito!" Tito's iron coat represents his last effort to replace his organic conscience with a metal that cannot feel--it is a supreme effort to hide from the moral law. But in spite of it, he cannot just stop feeling alienated. Consequently, alienation from Baldassarre sets into motion a chain reaction which culminates in alienation from Romola and from Florence.

But moral dynamics does find a way of urging him to acknowledge his kinship with Baldassarre. As he escapes from the clutch of the murderous Campagnacci, whom he has deceived, he runs into that of his adoptive father. Father and son die in the arms of each other: "The aged man had fallen forward, and his dead clutch was on the garment of the other. It was not possible to separate them: nay, it was better to put them into the waggon and carry them as they were into the great Piazza" (lxvii). Interestingly this is the same Piazza where Tito had previously denied his father, calling him "some madman". But now their dead bodies publicly renounce the denial. Reflecting on their mutual relationship in death, the narrator observes that "justice is like the kingdom of God--it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning." The case of Tito demonstrates the use of force to urge the recognition of the moral law. His death in the arms of his mortal enemy shows how impossible it is to live in solitude in the worlds of George Eliot's novels.

At the beginning of Felix Holt, the characters are morally and socially segregated. Mrs Transome loves power and social status, and will have nothing to do with the Holts and Lyons. Harold, also a lover of power, wants to use people and things for his private interests only. He detests those that he cannot use. Felix thinks that he alone can bring about reform, and Esther is not interested in ideas and opinions that do not conform to her notions about "niceties".

Moral dynamics uses love and the force of election riots to bring the characters together. Felix and Esther, in spite of themselves, fall in love with each other. Felix is imprisoned because of election riots. At his trial, Esther's love makes a deep impression on the people, and they decide to ignore their differences and unite in behalf of Felix. Sir Maximus Debarry's reaction is typical: "I tell you what, Gus! we must exert ourselves to get a pardon for this young fellow. . . . That girl made me cry. . . . She is a modest, brave, beautiful woman. I'd ride a steeplechase, old as I am, to gratify her feelings" (F.H., xlvii). George Eliot often uses beautiful womanhood to touch the hardened hearts of men. Through the love of Esther, Harold and his mother are also reconciled. Esther, who begins life as an Idione, isolated in a narrow microcosm, becomes at the end a means by which North Loamshire attains moral consciousness and modulates to its Hieria.

Like Felix Holt's, the universe of Middlemarch is also split into little worlds. When Lydgate first sees Dorothea he says, "It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons, yet they are too ignorant to understand the merits of any question, and usually fall back on their moral sense to settle things after their own taste" (M., x). But as a medical doctor he cannot avoid relating to Dorothea, at least professionally. During his visists to her, her "moral sense" makes a deep impression on him. He is particularly impressed by her concern for her husband which contrasts with his own wife's lack of concern for him. When he is in trouble, he cannot help confiding in Dorothea. Suffering is a means by which moral dynamics forces a character to recognize his kinship with his fellow men. He discovers that Dorothea has understanding as well as large sympathies, and she becomes for him a symbol of physical and moral beauty. "This young creature has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary," he reflects at last. "I never saw in any woman before--a fountain of friendship towards men--a man can make a friend of her" (M., lxxvi).

On the other hand, Dorothea finds herself isolated in a narrow microcosm when she attempts to segregate her love and her intellectual life. She wants to serve her community through knowledge, and not through love. But for George Eliot, love is an essential moral agent because it is faithful and can be relied on. "The future must always be in one sense dark," she writes to Emily Cross, "but with a deep love which enables us to be the light and bliss of another, we can never be without reason for saying 'I am glad that I have lived.'"[12] Knowledge and theories of knowledge are uncertain. But love is as mutually beneficient as it is reliable, because it is always preceded by a mutual exchange of sympathies. But Dorothea in fact falls in love with Ladislaw and finds that her love, far from being a hindrance, is a moral force by which her knowledge becomes useful. At the moment of crisis, when suspicions tend to rend her apart, love helps her not only to triumph over her egoistic desires, but also to help others. She is reminded that her affection is not just a selfish emotion but a sympathetic feeling with the definite moral purpose of rescuing others from the suffering which error brings. "The objects of her rescue were not to be sought out by her fancy," her moral sense tells her. "They were chosen for her. She yearned towards the perfect Right, that it may make a throne within her, and rule her errant will" (M., lxxx). Love has melted into the moral current that links her inside with her outside, and has hence become for her a unifying moral influence. It is through her influence that the worlds of Middlemarch are unified in a moral microcosm. Her love, for instance, saves Ladislaw from the sin of adultery with Rosamond. The homeless, dilettante artist has no moral link with the outside world except Dorothea's love. At the moment of his crisis, he clings to this love as a baby clings to its mother's breasts: "I had no hope before--not much--of anything better to come," he tells Rosamond. "But I had one certainty--that she believed in me. Whatever people had said or done about me, she believed me" (lxxviii). It is relevant to my essay that Ladislaw, Lydgate, and even Rosamond find themselves responding to Dorothea's love. Her love, as I have shown, is an agent of moral dynamics, and its force is irresistible. Casaubon, in spite of his emotional desiccation, responds to his wife's love in his own way. Before he dies he is willing to trust her with the work on which he has staked his whole life.

Moral dynamics often uses memory to bring moral consciousness to one and to reintegrate an isolated character into society. Bulstrode's actions are determined by his energetic efforts to obliterate the memory of his sordid past. For this reason, he leaves London--the scene of an undesirable past--to resettle in Middlemarch where he has high hopes of living a second life that is free from the sins of his yesterday. But unfortunately, memory will not leave him alone:

> Night and day, without interruption save of brief sleep which only wove retrospect and fear into a fantastic present, he felt the scenes of his earlier life coming between him and everything else, as obstinately as when we look through the window from a lighted room, the objects we turn our backs on are still before us, instead of the grass and the trees. The successive events inward and outward were there in one view; though each might be dwelt on in turn, the rest still kept their hold in the consciousness. (M., lxi)

Man, the moral animal, cannot do without memory. The speaker in Impressions of Theophrastus Such talks applaudingly of the "divine gift of a memory which inspires the moments with a past, a present, and a future, and gives the sense of corporate existence that raises man above the otherwise more respectable and innocent brute."[13] Memory is not an entity that exists in an individual at one given time or another, but a moral force that is ever present;

along with the feelings of sympathy and love, it has evolved with the individual. The only way be which one can unify one's memory, and hence save oneself from torture is to accept full responsibility for one's actions--past and present. Commenting on Bulstrode's perplexity, the narrator observes that "intense memory forces a man to own his blameworthy past. With memory set smarting like a reopened wound, a man's past is not simply a dead history, an outworn preparation of the present: it is not a repented error shaken loose from the life: it is a still quivering part of himself, bringing shudders and bitter flavours and the tinglings of a merited shame."

To assist Bulstrode's memory, a visitor from the dreaded past visits him at a time when he is most prosperous, in his material as well as spiritual aims. The visitor is his former business associate Raffles: "By Jove, Nick, it's you! I couldn't be mistaken, though the five-and-twenty years have played old Bogey with us both! How are you, eh? you didn't expect to see me here" (liii). Raffles' assertive statement, "you didn't expect to see me here," significantly reminds Bulstrode that his present cannot be isolated from his past. In spite of the twenty-five years that have elapsed since their last meeting, nothing really has changed. Neither Bulstrode's wishes nor his new circumstances can alter the nature of his past association with Raffles. The moral law requires that the banker say to his friend: "Yes, I thought you would find me again. But I will not yield to your blackmail. I will make a confession of my past and make amends where possible." Such a confession will not alter the past, but will bridge the gap that separates his past from his present, and hence prepare him for moral regeneration.

Bulstrode's fear of his memory and past underscores the point that I am trying to make in my thesis that characters are developed, in George Eliot, through moral growth, and that because of the moral process involved in his development, a character cannot successfully isolate himself in a narrow microcosm.

Daniel performs in Daniel Deronda, the function assigned to Dorothea in Middlemarch; Maggie in The Mill on the Floss; Romola in Romola, and Esther in Felix Holt. He is a unifying agent, and what is dramatized in his relationships with Mirah, Gwendolen, and Mordecai is not coincidence but the force of moral dynamics. Mirah's attempt to drown herself is an act of selfishness which violates the moral law. Daniel is brought to the scene to save her not because of coincidence but because he is looking for something good to do. His action demonstrates par excellence the theme of my thesis that a character's action is dependent on his mental attitudes. Dorothy Van Ghent's observation that "the apparent coincidences in Dickens actually obey a causal order--not of physical mechanics, but of moral dynamics"[14] is eminently applicable to George Eliot. In George Eliot, coincidence does not come about as a result of unexplained accident; it is the logical outcome of a cause-effect process that is always going on in the mind of characters. This process is always forcing the mind to recognize its social needs and to gravitate in the direction of what will satisfy the needs. A classic example of coincidence as a cause-effect process is that of the apparently coincidental meeting of Daniel Deronda and Mordecai on Blackfriars Bridge. Before the meeting, each character, as we saw in Part I of this thesis, is yearning for a moral purpose or a larger general life to identify with. Their coming together is therefore not just the accidental meeting of any two men, but of two men morally and psychologically prepared to use each other. What their meeting dramatizes is not at all coincidence, but two characters who are gravitating in the direction of each other:

> For Deronda, anxious that Mordecai should recognize and await him, had lost no time before signalling, and the answer came straightway. Mordecai lifted his cap and waved--feeling in that moment that his inward prophecy was fulfilled. Obstacles, incongruities, all melted into the sense of completion with which his soul was flooded by this outward satisfaction of his longing. His exultation was not widely different from that of the experimenter, bending over the first stirrings of change that correspond to what in the fervour of concentrated prevision his thought has foreshadowed. The prefigured friend had come from the golden background, and had signalled to him. (DD., xl)

Daniel is also anticipating the meeting with Mordecai. Upon landing he tells him that he "was intending to go on to the book-shop and look for you." But Mordecai informs him that he has, in fact, been waiting for him for five years. Daniel is naturally surprised. He has met him for the first time only a few weeks prior to their meeting on the Bridge. His surprise is justified by the law of physical mechanics, not of moral dynamics. The element of surprise is removed when Mordecai's and Daniel's histories are known. Daniel finds that they have a common inheritance in their Jewish origin and that Mordecai's expectation is a moral yearning which, in fact, is innate in both of them. He consequently identifies Mordecai's yearning with his own desire for a moral goal.

Barbara Hardy relevantly notes that even where George Eliot "uses coincidence in the ordinary narrative conventions of discovery and accident, it is hardly ever interpreted as a version of Fate, as it usually is in Hardy, but merely as a narrative means to a moral end."[15] The coincidence is not a means to an end but a moral phenomenon brought about by the nature of life itself. Mordecai, for instance, expects Daniel to be a Jew, because for him his being a Jew is a moral necessity. On the other hand, Daniel's being a Jew does not derive from Mordecai's desire, but conforms with it because of the ethical nature of a society in which one must be a Jew, a Briton, a German, or of any other nationality. Daniel rightly regards Mordecai as a moral agent and nothing more: "It is you who have given shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning," he tells the Hebrew seer, "the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors" (lxiii). This brooding passionate thought is the emotional-intellectual force which I have elsewhere identified as responsible for the moral evolution, an event that is unique to man. But the aim of moral evolution is to bring people together in the way that brutes are not.

The same moral force that brings Daniel to Mirah also brings him to Gwendolen. Like Mirah, Gwendolen is engaged in an act of supreme egoism when Daniel discovers her. At their first meeting, the heroine is literally hypnotized by Deronda and Deronda is in turn arrested by Gwendolen's dynamic glance. But significant in this meeting is the current of moral consciousness that passes from Deronda to Gwendolen. The dam that isolates Gwendolen from the external moral world is suddenly broken, and for the first time in her life she is worried about what someone else thinks of her:

> The darting sense that he was measuring her, and looking down on her as an inferior, that he was of different quality from the human dross around her, that he felt himself in a region outside and above her, and was examining her as a specimen of a lower order, roused a tingling resentment which stretched the moment with conflict. . . . She controlled herself by the help of an inward defiance, and without other sign of emotion than this lip-paleness turned to her play. But Deronda's gaze seemed to have acted as an evil eye. Her stake was gone. (D.D., i)

Deronda's glance has a disturbing effect because Gwendolen's moral feeling has been aroused and she cannot remain isolated much longer. But for a moment she is defiant and continues to gamble. However, do what she may, she cannot stop the flow of the moral stream that Daniel's presence has caused to flow. Just as Maggie Tulliver cannot forget the first impression that Thomas à Kempis makes on her, Gwendolen will never forget Daniel's glance. On the other hand, Gwendolen's "dynamic glance" raises in Daniel "an inward debate" on the nature of good and evil. "What was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance?" he asks himself. "Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams?" Deronda cannot help asking these moral questions because he carries the seed of morality within him. As a moral agent, he cannot avoid a sympathetic relationship with Gwendolen--a relationship which opens the way for a free flow of feelings between them.

It will be appropriate, I think, to end my discussion on moral dynamics with the case of a character who makes a spirited effort to resist the force of the moral law. Daniel Deronda's mother Alcharisi decides to sever not only herself but also Daniel from the Jewish tradition. When her Jewish husband dies, she sends Daniel to be brought up as an English gentleman, while she herself becomes a Russian princess by a second marriage. But faced with the pressure of life--disease and suffering--her conscience upbraids her for robbing her son of his birthright. She is surprised that the tradition is within her as a moral stream. Daniel himself cannot comprehend why his mother has suddenly decided to reveal a secret which she has kept with her for so long; and asks her the reason for her sudden change of attitude. Alcharisi's reply indicates that she has surrendered to a higher and an irresistible law:

> "Events come upon us like evil enchantments: and thoughts, feelings, apparitions in the darkness are events--are they not? I don't consent. We only consent to what we love. I obey something tyrannic"--she spread out her hands again--"I am forced to be withered, to feel pain, to be dying slowly. Do I love that? Well, I have been forced to obey my dead father. I have been forced to tell you that you are a Jew, and deliver to you what he commanded me to deliver." (D.D., li)

The scene is an excellent description of moral dynamics operating on the mind of an inveterate egoist, who must be forced to obey the moral law. The law is tyrannical only to the mind that refuses to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship that exists between the individual and his community. By consistently opposing his will against the dictates of the moral law, the egoist invites a conflict from which he never emerges victorious. Alcharisi is even more surprised when she learns that she has not only lost the battle but that she has in fact inadvertently prepared the way for the victory of moral tradition. She has helped Daniel in his decision to go on a missionary journey to the Jews of Palestine. "You are glad to have been born a Jew. You say so," she ruefully tells her son. "That is because you have not been brought up as a Jew. That separateness seems sweet to you because I saved you from it." The ways of moral dynamics are many but not strange. Alcharisi, like every other character in George Eliot, has the seed of morality within her. She cannot avoid moral action.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the world of George Eliot's novels is established on a moral principle, and that the moral law operates within and without the individual. No one can develop himself emotionally and intellectually outside the moral order. Part I of my thesis demonstrates that tragedy comes when characters try to live in narrow microcosms, outside the moral law, and that the essential conflicts in George Eliot's novels arise from different mental attitudes towards the moral principle. Part II of the thesis shows how moral dynamics brings characters from various walks of life together, in spite of themselves. Death, suffering, love, sympathy, memory, and coincidence are some of the means by which characters are brought into the fold of the moral order.

Footnotes

Introduction

1. *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1954), ii, 299; hereafter cited as *Letters*.

2. "The Architecture of George Eliot's Novels," *MLQ*, ix(1945), 37-50.

3. "Notes on Form in Art" in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), p.433.

4. *Letters*, vi, 216.

5. *Letters*, i, 247.

6. Jerome Thale, *The Novels of George* Eliot (New York, 1959), p.141.

7. George Eliot's contemporaries were quite excited about her psychological analyses of character. Observing that Gwendolen Harleth "runs mental reflections" after each few words she said to Grandcourt, John Blackwood adds "as far as I know a new device in reporting a converstion." *Letters*, vi, 182. Edith Simcox is similarly enthusiastic about the psychological technique of *Middlemarch* which, according to her, "marks and epoch in the history of fiction." *Academy* (1 January 1873), iv, 1-4; reprinted in *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll, (London, 1971), p.323.

Part I, Chapter I
Scenes of Clerical Life

1. "Man" in *George Herbert's Poems*, Chiswick Series (London, 1888), pp.98-90.

2. *Letters*, i, 127.

3. *Letters*, ii, 156.

4. Because of the importance that I attach to this parable in my essay, I am reproducing it here in its entirety. "A Little Fable with a Great Moral: In very early times indeed, when no maidens had looking-glasses, except the mermaidens, there lived in a deep valley two beautiful Hamadryads. Now the Hamadryads are a race

of nymphs that inhabit the forests. Whenever a little acorn, or a beech nut, or any other seed of a forest tree, begins to sprout, a little Hamadryad is born, and grows up, and lives and dies with the tree. So, you see, the Hamadryads, the daughters of the trees, live far longer than the daughters of men,--some of them even a thousand years; still, they do at last get old, and faded, and shrivelled. Now the two Hamadryads of whom I spoke lived in a forest by the side of a clear lake, and they loved better than anything to go down to the brink of the lake, and look into the mirror of waters; but not for the same reason. Idione loved to look into the lake because she saw herself there; she would sit on the bank, weaving leaves and flowers in her silken hair, and smiling at her own image all the day long, and if the pretty water-lilies or any other plants began to spread themselves on the surface below her, and spoil her mirror, she would tear them up in anger. But Hieria cared not to look at herself in the lake; she only cared about watching the heavens as they were reflected in its bosom--the foamy clouds on the clear blue by day, and the moon and the stars by night. She did not mind that the water-lilies grew below her, for she was always looking farther off, into the deep part of the lake; she only thought the lilies pretty and loved them. So, in the course of time, these two Hamadryads grew old, and Idione began to be angry with the lake, and to hate it, because it no longer gave back a pleasant image of herself, and she would carry little stones to the margin, and dash them into the lake for vengeance; but she only tired herself, and did not hurt the lake. And as she was frowning and looking spiteful all the day, the lake only went on giving her an uglier and uglier picture of herself, till at last she ran away from it into the hollow of her tree, and sat there lonely and sad till she died. But Hieria grew old without finding it out, for she never looked for herself in the lake;--only as, in the centuries she had lived, some of the thick forests had been cleared away from the earth, and men had begun to build and to plough, the sky was less often obscured by vapours, so that the lake was more and more beautiful to her, and she loved better and better the water-lilies that grew below her. Until one morning, after she had been watching the stars in the lake, she went home to her tree, and lying down, she fell into a gentle sleep, and dreamed that she had left her mouldering tree, and had been carried up to live in a star, from which she could still look down on her lake that she had loved so long. And while she was dreaming this, men came and cut down her tree, and Hieria died without knowing she had become old." Retyped from *Essays of*

George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), pp. 21-22; hereafter cited as Essays.

5. Idione and Hieria are derived from the Greek words Idios and Hieros respectively meaning " private" and "holy." In this essay Idione is used to represent the egoistic quality unique to each individual and which isolates him in a narrow self-centred world or microcosm. Hieria is, of course, the opposite of Idione, it represents the altruistic self or that side of the self which tends to bring the individual into a harmonious relationship with the moral universe.

6. The Novels of George Eliot (Oxford, 1967), p.81.

7. Ibid., p.78.

8. George Eliot uses the word to describe the "play of various, nay, contrary tendencies" (D.D., iv) in Gwendolen. A good example is Gwendolen's simultaneous show of strength and timidity when she plays the queen in a game of charade.

9. Joan Bennett asserts that the "central drama" in George Eliot's works springs from "a tension between the individual and the community," and that "she had posed her characters with the problem of adapting their personal desires, noble or selfish, to the inescapable surrounding conditions represented by an organic community." George Eliot: Her Mind and Art (Cambridge, 1948), p.84. See also U. C. Knoepflmacher's comments in George Eliot's Early Novels (California, 1968), Ch.II.

10. "Amos Barton" in "Scenes of Clerical Life," The Works of George Eliot, ed. J. W. Cross (Cabinet ed. Edinburgh and London, 1880), xxiii. As there is no complete or critical edition of George Eliot's works, I am using the cabinet edition where modern critical editions are not available.

11. Knoepflmacher identifies Amos Barton with the poet Young, whose hypocrisy George Eliot had attacked in her essay, "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness"(January, 1857). Op.cit. p.43.

12. Ibid., p.48.

13. Both George Eliot and John Ruskin believe that the love which the individual extends to his society is developed in a domestic situation at home. In Sesame and Lilies, Ruskin says, "This is the true nature of home--

it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury but from all terror, doubt and division." See "Of the Queen's Gardens" Sect.68 (London, 1865). See also George Eliot's "Woman in France: Madame de Sable," WR, lxii (October 1854), 448-478; reprinted in Essays, pp. 52-81.

14. Joan Bennett talks of Milly's death scene as if it is an incident created entirely for sentimentality: "It is easy to draw tears by describing the death of a devoted mother who summons her children one by one to her bedside and harrows their feelings with her 'selfless' dying words. But such scenes are often, on reflection, unconvincing and few modern readers will be able to accept Milly's death-bed." Op.cit., p.92. U. C. Knoepflmacher agrees with Joan Bennett. Milly Barton, he claims, is "the first and most sentimentalized of George Eliot's portrayals of ideal womanhodd." Op.cit., p.49.

15. T. A. Noble, George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life (New Haven, 1965), pp.111,121, & 109.

16. By the use of numerous examples, Barbara Hardy discusses this and other scenes of disenchantment in George Eliot. This is an important work for students of George Eliot. Op.cit., Ch.ix.

17. Letters, I, p.264.

18. See note 16 for Barbara Hardy's useful discussion of disenchantment in George Eliot.

19. See John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic" in The Stones of Venice, vii (London, 1851-53), Ch. vi.

20. Wybrow is the forerunner of a long line of selfish philandering, idle young men--Arthur, Tito, Ladislaw, Fred, Stephen--who people George Eliot's fictional world. Thomas Noble makes an interesting comparison of Arthur and Wybrow, showing that the latter is a valuable prelude to the creation of the former. Op.cit., p.133.

21. Ibid., p.133.

22. Spectator, xxxvi (18 July 1863), 2265-7; reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London, 1971), p.199; hereafter cited as Critical Heritage.

23. Letters, ii, 297.

24. *Letters*, ii, 299.

25. Maynard and Caterina anticipate the more fully developed Adam and Hetty. The idea of a fragile Circe turning heroes into swines must have intrigued George Eliot.

26. In *Leader*, vi (13 October 1855), 988-989; reprinted in *Essays*, p.201.

27. *Letters*, i, 268.

28. *WR*, lxvi (July, 1856), 51-79; reprinted in *Essays*, p.272.

29. Tryan plays the role that George Eliot assigns to religion in a primitive community. The author says, in a letter of 11 June 1857 to John Blackwood, that "the collision in the drama is not at all between 'bigotted churchmanship and evangelicalism,' but between irreligion and religion. Religion in this case happens to be represented by evangelicalism. . . . I thought I had made it apparent in my sketch of Milby feelings on the advent of Mr Tryan that the conflict lay between immorality and morality--irreligion and religion." (*Letters*, ii, 347).

30. Knoepflmacher links Janet's conversion to Feuerbach's conception of the nature of the Christian God. *George Eliot's Early Novels*, p.85.

Chapter II
Adam Bede

1. *The Great Tradition* (London, 1948), p.50.

2. Joan Bennett says that George Eliot "was not consciously interested in form and neither she, nor any other novelist of her day, discusses the shape of a novel with alert awareness comparable to what we find in Henry James's prefaces. The organization of material was a more or less unconscious result of her conception of the subject." *George Eliot* (Cambridge, 1948), p.102. Ironically, in the same essay she eulogizes what she calls the symmetry of *Adam Bede* whose "simple, well-contrived pattern conveys the sense of a social structure enclosing four human beings as completely as the soil encloses the roots of a growing plant and, in so doing, it illustrates some aspect of the author's vision of life" (p.80).

3. Barbara Hardy, ed. Daniel Deronda (Middlesex, 1967), Introduction, p.8.

4. According to George Eliot, when she began to write Adam Bede "the only elements I had determined on, besides the character of Dinah, were the character of Adam, his relation to Arthur Donnithorne, and their mutual relations to Hetty." "Journal," (16 November 1858); reprinted in George Eliot's Life as Related in her Letters and Journals, V.1 (Edinburgh and London, 1885), p.65; hereafter cited as Life.

5. Adam Bede, ed. John Paterson (Boston, 1968); all future references to text are from this edition.

6. Spencer says that experience and vision unite to produce sympathy, and hence strong persons, though they may be essentially sympathetic in their natures, cannot adequately enter into the feeling of the weak. This statement is particularly relevant to Adam. Principles of Psychology, Vols 1 & 2 [(New York, 1880),1855], p.150.

7. Adam conceives of a society as a bee community which, according to Thomas Huxley, is the "direct product of an organic necessity, impelling every member of it to a course of action which tends to the good of the whole. Each bee has its duty and none has any rights . . . The bee society exhibits the perfection of an automatic mechanism hammered by the blows of the struggle for existence upon the progeny of the solitary bees." Huxley then shows how the bees are predestined to particular functions in society and argues that man's society resulted from man's desires and not from "predestination to sharply defined place in the social organism of mankind." "Prolegomena to Evolution and Ethics," 1893; in Touchstone for Ethics, ed. J. Huxley (New York, 1947), ix, 54.

8. The Novels of George Eliot (Oxford, 1959), p.37.

9. In George Eliot, consciousness is related to keenness of sensibility and plays a major role in bringing about the moral order. See Chapter xviii of Adam Bede and also my previous reference to Barbara Hardy's "Moments of Disenchantment" in George Eliot. In Problems of Life and Mind, George Lewes gives a concept of consciousness which may have influenced George Eliot: "Consciousness has evolved in man alone, and in man alone, consciousness, the ability to separate 'Self from Not-self, objects from feeling.' It is the pri-

mary source of the moral order; it produces the awareness of species, of others as different from, yet like ourselves, which is the basis of all ethical action, of the sense of solidarity with our kind which leads us to sacrifice our own immediate gratification for the good of others. The law of animal action is Individualism; its motto is 'Each for himself against all.' The ideal of human action is Altruism; its motto is 'Each with others, all for each.'"(London, 1874-75), i, p.134.

10. Casaubon and Lydgate respectively create Dorothea and Rosamond in the same way.

11. Paris points out that the mistakes that Adam, Romola, and Dorothea make about Hetty, Tito, and Casaubon are "instances of a higher nature projecting its own qualities into a lower nature." Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.132.

12. George Eliot's Early Novels, p.112.

13. Paris points out that while George Eliot requires her characters to view realism scientifically, she recognizes that a purely objective view of realism could provide no moral or sense of purpose; hence though rejecting the subjective approach as a means of arriving at truth, she also regarded it as "the only way of comprehending the significance of human values." Ibid., pp.242-244.

14. The Art of George Eliot (London, 1961), p.180.

15. Ibid., p.181; see also Note 1 above.

16. Vol.1. p.117.

17. The Mill on the Floss (Bk.vi, Ch.xi). "Love is natural," says Maggie, "but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too." Quentin Anderson contends that the essential problem that George Eliot tackled is "how can a social world be felt and understood?" The greatness of George Eliot, he adds, is that "she knew and could show that every idea is attended by a passion; that thought is a passionate act." "George Eliot in Middlemarch" in From Dickens to Hardy, ed. Boris Ford (Middlesex, 1958); reprinted in Discussions of George Eliot, ed. Richard Stang (Boston, 1960), p.85.

18. Adam Bede (Riverside, Boston, 1968), p. 106, footnote.

19. Knoepflmacher says that Arthur's rejection of Wordsworth's treatment of ordinary life and lack of interest in religious and sectarian affairs shows that his world lacks spiritual values. *Op. cit.*, p.94.

20. "An Interpretation of *Adam Bede*," in *George Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New Jersey, 1970), p 96; reprinted from *ELH*, xxiii, No.3. (Sept, 1956), pp.218-238.

21. Creeger says that the journey symbolizes the vain aimlessness of Hetty's mind, and thinks that George Eliot was apparently influenced by a passage from Ludwig Feuerbach: "He who has an aim has a law over him; he does not merely guide himself; he is guided. He who has no aim, has no home, no sanctuary; aimlessness is the greatest unhappiness. Even he who has only common aims gets on better, though he may not be better, than he who has no aim." *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. Marian Evans, 2nd ed. (London, 1881), p.64. See also Note 20.

22. Hetty's regret is reminiscent of Francesco's agonized complaint: There is no greater woe/Than Happiness recalled in misery. "Inferno: in *The Divine Comedy*, trans and ed. Thomas G. Bergin (New York, 1955), v, 119-120. Daniel Deronda was whistling a song from Francesco's complaint when he saw Mirah about to drown herself. *Daniel Deronda* (Ch.xvii).

Chapter III
The Mill on the Floss

1. *George Eliot's Early Novels* (Los Angeles, 1968), p.92. B. J. Paris also attributes the conflicts of the novel to a struggle between Maggie and her environment: "Maggie has two alternatives: she must adapt to her environment, which will involve a radical change in her nature and values, or she must abide the consequences, both spiritual and physical, of being in disharmony with the world in which she lives." "Toward a Revaluation of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*" (*NCF*, 1956), 19-31.

2. *The Novels of George Eliot* (London, 1958), p.84. However in the chapter on "Plot and Form" she argues that the pattern is founded on the repetition of temptation: "Maggie is tempted by Philip, first resists and refuses, and then succumbs. Then comes the stronger temptations by Stephen" (pp. 116-117).

3. *Ibid*.

4. Jerome Thale, The Novels of George Eliot (New York, 1959), p.38.

5. The Mill on the Floss, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Riverside ed., Boston, 1961). All future references to text are from this edition.

6. "Introduction," Ibid., p.viii.

7. Barbara Hardy attributes part of Maggie's problems to the paralyzing disability which George Eliot's heroines share.

8. "An Image of Disenchantment in the Novels of George Eliot," RES, New Series, Vol.xi, No.41 (1960), p.32.

9. B. J. Paris admirably sums up the effect of the family's misfortunes thus: "in the emotional communion with her family that resulted from their common misfortune, Maggie was taken outside of herself, and she experienced a satisfaction wholly new to her. " In "Toward a Revaluation," op.cit., p.22.

10. Letters, III, 445.

11. The effect that the saint produces on Maggie is akin to George Eliot's experience upon reading the book: "One breathes a cool air as of cloisters in the book,-- it makes one long to be a saint for a few months. Verily its piety has its foundations in the depth of the divine human soul." Letters, I, 278.

12. According to George Eliot, "Those who have strength to wait and endure, are bound to accept no formula which their whole souls--their intellect as well as their emotions--do not embrace with entire reverence. The highest 'calling and election' is to do without opium and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance." Letters, III,336.

13. Observing that music is one of the recurring images of the novel, Barbara Hardy points out significantly that Maggie's "disenchantment [Bk.iv, iii] is expressed in terms of an absence of music." (Op.cit., p.117). Music seems to be intimately associated with Maggie's ecstatic idealism.

14. It is probably because of this dissociation of sensibilities that some critics find the later part of the novel unsatisfactory. R. H. Hutton calls the novel "a masterly fragment of fictitious biography in two volumes, followed by a second-rate one volume novel." Nat-

tional Review (July, 1864), xi, 214. G. Haight finds its concluding pages lacking in "the same degree of realism found in the earlier part." (Introduction, Riverside ed.), p.xix. See also U. C. Knoepflmacher, op.cit., p.205.

15. According to B. J. Paris, Maggie's spiritual hunger is "not (as with Dorothea) the source, but the product of her frustrations; her hunger is not initially 'for ideal exaltations,' but for an approach to life which will reconcile her to the hardness of her lot." Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.157. I think that it is more correct to say that her spiritual life is encrusted in her egoism, which intensifies with her frustrations. She could not have been attracted to Thomas à Kempis unless she has an innate spiritual life.

16. George Eliot was responding to Bulwer-Lytton's objection to Maggie's "indulgence of such a sentiment for the affianced of a friend under whose roof she was. . ." Letters, III, 317-318; See also Cross, V.II, 222.

17. The most vicious criticism is from Leslie Stephen, who contends that Maggie's relationship with Stephen Guest is an "irrelevant and discordant degradation." "George Eliot" in English Men of Letters, (London, 1902), p.104. In an attempt to rescue Stephen Guest from hostile criticisms, Gordon Haight argues unconvincingly that Stephen and Lucy were not officially engaged: "the evidence, fairly weighed, makes it clear that Maggie was compromised, not by any dishonourable deception of Stephen's but by her own divided nature. . . the difficulty lies not in believing that Maggie was 'borne along by the tide,' but that she could have turned back when she did." A Century of George Eliot Criticism, pp.342-3; p.345.

18. Barbara Hardy points out that the "friendly and relaxed gentleness of Maggie's relation with Philip meets its contrast in the uneasy embarrassment of the early stages of her relation with Stephen--perhaps George Eliot's only real portrayal of sexual tension." Op.cit., p.56.

19. Gordon Haight sees the contrasted attractions that Philip and Stephen offter Maggie as a Darwinian struggle for sexual selection. A Century of George Eliot Criticism, p.344.

20. Commenting on the appropriateness of Philip's letter to Maggie's situation, Barbara Hardy says that "Philip

recognizes Maggie's need, her clamping control of that need and all the consequent dangers. He sees too--later --that the irony of her temptation by Stephen lies in the very fact of Stephen's 'unworthiness.'" Op.cit., p.55.

21. George Eliot says that the concluding pages of The Mill on the Floss were "written in a furor. . . but I dare say there is not a word different from what it would have been if I had written them at the slowest pace." Letters, III, 278.

22. B. J. Paris equates the storm raging outside Maggie's window with her inside agitations, and invites attention to the cessation of the storm as she heads her boat towards Dorlcote Mill. Op.cit., p.30.

23. David Carroll attributes the flood to the malevolence of an "angry destroying god" bringing punishment on St Ogg's, whose "want of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility is condemned by Dr Kenn." Op.cit., p.32.

24. He argues that "though Maggie's death is intended to be an inspiriting sacrifice which will teach the reader to acquiesce in the inevitability of change, it remains a senseless sacrifice nonetheless." Op.cit., p.182. The ending of the novel has attracted much critical commentary. Joan Bennett finds unsatisfactory Maggie's sacrifice of her own and Stephen's happiness. George Eliot, (Cambridge, 1948), p.127. And Gerald Bullett feels that "Maggie was hurried by her author to a premature death because George Eliot created in Maggie's conflict between her love for Stephen and her loyalty to Philip and Lucy a moral dilemma which she is unable satisfactorily to resolve." George Eliot, pp.118 & 188; also Bennett, op.cit., pp.120-121 & 129. But by the use of illustrations from George Eliot's notebook, Gordon Haight shows conclusively that the flood which ends The Mill on the Floss "was not an afterthought to extricate the author from an impossible situation, but part of the story that George Eliot planned first." A Century of George Eliot Criticism, p.339.

25. B. J. Paris's remark on the death of Maggie is particularly pertinent to my thesis: "Maggie Tulliver's death is not merely the authoress's expedient for evading the problem which the preceding part of the novel has established. It is the culmination--in terms of George Eliot's universe, the only possible culmination--of Maggie's search for calm." Experiments, p.30. Thomas Pinney also sees the unity of the early and later parts

of the novel in the death of the heroine. The conclusion, he says, is intended to "affirm the supreme value of the early affections of Maggie and Tom for each other." "The Authority of the Past in George Eliot's Novels," NCF, xxi, (Sept, 1966), 137.

26. Letters, III, 299.

Chapter IV
Silas Marner

1. Letters, III, 382.

2. George Eliot (London, 1947), p.191.

3. The Great Tradition (London, 1948), p.58. Leavis has since altered his attitude towards Silas Marner: "I think now that I have done less than justice to Silas Marner, and that my stresses on 'minor' and 'fairy-tales' are infelicitous." Footnoted in 1959; reprinted (Middlesex: Penguin ed., 1962), p.60n.

4. "Structure and Quality in Silas Marner," Studies in English Lit., vi,718. In spite of his contention that "Silas stands at the centre of the legendary element," Ian Milner argues elsewhere that "the mark of man's inhumanity to man lies heavy" across the early pages of Silas Marner:" Marner's cursing of his God, his destruction of himself as a human being, his abject despair, belong not to the pleasant illusion of fairy-tale but to the encounters of tragic moral drama." Ibid., pp.728-9.

5. The Early Novels of George Eliot, p.237.

6. "Silas Marner: Reversing the Oracles of Religion," LM (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1967), p.181.

7. Letters, III, 382.

8. David Carroll, op.cit., pp.174-5.

9. Commenting on the psychology of prayer, Mohandas Ghandhi says that to those who pray, "supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking." An Autobiography (Boston, 1957), p.72.

10. David Carroll thinks that "Lantern Yard" symbolizes a light which is opposed to the "encroaching darkness of

industrial England, and its fanatical Protestantism." Op.cit., p.178. But the "narrowness" which elsewhere in the text is associated with the Lantern Yard rather supports the notion that the dim light of the Yard is meant as a contrast with the bright light of the day: "The little light he possessed," says the narrator, "spread its beams so narrowly that frustrated belief was a curtain broad enough to create for him the blackness of night" (ii).

11. The Works of George Eliot (Cabinet ed., Edinburgh and London, 1877-1880) Vol.21. All future references to text are from this edition.

12. The Art of George Eliot (London, 1961), p.138.

13. "Silas Marner" in The Novels of George Eliot (New York, 1959); reprinted in Discussions of George Eliot, ed. Richard Stang (Boston, 1960), p.96.

14. Adam Bede, ed. John Paterson (Riverside, Boston, 1969), Ch. xli.

15. Letters, III, 382.

16. David Carroll, op.cit., p. 175.

17. See notes 2, 4, and 7.

18. David Carroll, op.cit., p.180.

19. "Woman in France: Madame de Sable," WR, lxii (Oct., 1854), 448-473; reprinted in Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York), p.81; hereafter cited as Essays.

20. See particularly George Eliot's essays on "Evangelical Teaching: Dr Cumming," WR (Oct., 1855), and "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young," WR (January, 1857); reprinted in Essays, pp.158-189; 335-385.

21. "The Novels of George Eliot," The Atlantic Monthly, xviii (October, 1866), p.485.

22. B. J. Paris says that the egoist in George Eliot is often a gambler, and compares Godfrey Cass with Arthur Donnithorne, Mrs Transome, Jermyn, Tito, Bulstrode, and Gwendolen. Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.130.

23. David Carroll makes an interesting comparison of the religions of Silas and Godfrey. See note 6.

24. Carroll points out rather significantly that it is Godfrey's intentional crime which accounts for the different endings to the two stories: "Godfrey wishes harm upon a fellow human being, Silas never does." Ibid., p.181.

25. Letters, III, 382.

Chapter V
Romola

1. Letters, VI, 335-336.

2. See the introductory part of this thesis.

3. Spectator, xxxvi (18 July 1863), 2265-7; reprinted in The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London, 1971), p.199; hereafter cited as Critical Heritage.

4. "George Eliot's Novels," Home and Foreign Review (October 1863), iii, 522-49; reprinted in Critical Heritage, p.232. Simpson's illustration is closer to George Eliot's psychological method than Barbara Hardy's use of "correspondence" and "parallelism"--see note 7.

5. Henry James argues that "the story deals predominantly, not with Romola as affected by Tito's faults, but with Tito's faults as affecting first himself, and incidentally his wife." "The Novels of George Eliot," Atlantic Monthly, xvii (October 1866), 485.

6. Romola, Oxford University ed. (London, 1913). All future references in this essay to text are from this edition.

7. See Simpson's illustration of the form of Romola which appears to me to be much more relevant to the actions of the novel than Barbara Hardy's rather mathematical emphasis on "correspondence" and "parallelism." "There is the moral triangle of Romola, Tito, and Savonarola," she says, "and here the resemblance and contrast work together." The Novels of George Eliot, p.85.

8. The relationship between the individual and the laws of his community is essential in George Eliot. Pinney has a useful discussion of this in his essay, "The Authority of the Past in George Eliot's Novels" NCF, xxi, No.2 (September, 1966), 131-47; reprinted in George Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. G. R. Creeger (New Jersey, 1970, p.37-54.

9. David Carroll, "An Image of Disenchantment in the Novels of George Eliot," RES, New Series II (1960), 34.

10. See note 9 above.

11. Letters, VI, 216.

12. U. C. Knoepflmacher, "The 'Higher Criticism'" in Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel (New Jersey, 1965), pp.54-55.

13. The Novels of George Eliot, pp.87-88.

14. This shows that Romola is far from being dull and inactive, as some critics say. Her role as goddess is a necessary result of her upbringing; from the point of view of the conception of the novel, she is really very active. "If she walks through the streets 'like a procession' it is because she is a Florentine lady of noble family," says John A. Huzzard. "Far from being a piece of marble statuary, she is really in character an aristocratic lady in a country where women of high birth lived, and still live, under extremely rigid laws of decorum." "The Treatment of Florence and Florentine Characters in George Eliot's Romola," Italica, xxxiv (September, 1957), 161.

15. In her review of Antigone, George Eliot returns to the view which she had earlier taken in her essay on Riehl's "Natural History of German Life" that the struggle between the individual and state represents a struggle between the inner needs of man and the outside laws that govern him, and that by means of this struggle harmony will be established. "Until this harmony is perfected," she insists, "we shall never be able to attain a great right without also doing a wrong. Reformers, martyrs, revolutionists are never fighting against evil only; they are also placing themselves in opposition to a good --to a valid principle which cannot be infringed without harm." For the time being, she advises "that our protest for the right should be seasoned with moderation and reverence." "The Antigone and Its Moral," Leader, vii, (29 March 1856), 306; reprinted in Pinney, Essays, pp. 264-265.

16. The psychological cause of Tito's quest may be better understood by a comparison with Raskolnikov's quest for the Explosive Lieutenant Porfiry Petrovitch after his homicidal killing of the pawn broker in Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment.

17. See particularly Jerome Thale in The Novels of George Eliot (New York, 1959), 81.

18. David Carroll, op.cit., p.33.

19. Jerome Thale, who apparently has not diligently analyzed the possible effects of the fear of nemesis on Tito, complains that this and other psychological scenes involving Tito are "unsubtle and mechanical." Ibid., p.81.

20. Caroline Robinson says that Baldassarre in this speech sounds "less like a natural father than like some enraged deserted God." "Romola: A Reading of the Novel," VS, (1962), 40. Robinson's reading of Baldassarre's speech shows that she is too emotionally detached to enter into the feelings of the speaker.

21. "Notes on the Spanish Gypsy and Tragedy in General," George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, ed. J.W. Cross (Edinburgh and London, 1884), III, 35-36.

22. Commenting on Savonarola's conflicts, Jerome Thale points out that the moral life is a series of conflicts within the iron ring of the active ego. "The dilemma, to describe it in Schopenhauer's terms, is that the denial of the will involves an act of the will itself so that there is no escape from the prison of the active will." The Novels of George Eliot, pp.84-85.

23. Richard Simpson accuses George Eliot of inconsistency in the presentation of the Frate's character. He argues that Savonarola claims special revelation in accurately reading Romola's mind, while elsewhere his claim "to prophetic insight" is shown as imposture. Op.cit., pp.230-231. But his prophetic insight is really never shown to be false. The apparent fallacy in his utterances arises from a confusion of "miracle" and "revelation" in his own mind.

24. Introduction to the Oxford ed. of Romola (Oxford: World Clasics, 1913), p.viii.

25. "The Treatment of Florence and Florentine Characters in George Eliot's Romola, op.cit., p.161.

Chapter VI
Felix Holt

1. Letters, IV, 243.

2. A contemporary critic G. S. Venables says that the story "has the defect of running in two parallel lines with only an occasional and arbitrary connexion." Edinburgh Review, cxxiv (October 1966), 435-49; reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London, 1971), p.283; hereafter cited as The Critical Heritage. Joan Bennett in "Vision and Design" regrets that "although the ingredients of a first-rate George Eliot novel are all there, they are not successfully integrated." She does not think the social environment sufficiently convincing to provide a unifying centre. George Eliot (Cambridge, 1948), pp.88 & 83.

3. Letters, IV, 237-8.

4. George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, II, ed. John W. Cross. (Edinburgh & London, 1884), p.378.

5. See, particularly, Darrel Mansell Jr., "George Eliot's Conception of 'Form'," SEL, 5 (Autumn, 1965), 651-62; reprinted in George Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. George R. Creeger (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970, p.73; hereafter cited as Critical Essays. Also David Carroll, "Felix Holt: Society as Protagonist," NCF, xvii, No.3 (December, 1962), 237-52; reprinted in Critical Essays, pp.124-140.

6. George Eliot, Felix Holt, The Radical, ed. Sid Chaplin (London, 1965). All future references to the text are from this edition.

7. G. S. Venables, Critical Heritage, pp.283-4.

8. I come to thee for charitable license,
That we may wander o'er this bloody field
. . .
To sort our nobles from our common men.
For many of our princes--woe the while!--
Lie drown'd and soak'd in mercenary blood;
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
In blood of princes. . . .

Shakespeare, Henry the Fifth iv, vii, 74-81.

9. Speaking of George Eliot's last three novels, David Carroll says "No longer are the worlds of social and political action and that of the private individual merely juxtaposed--now they meet and interact in the minds of the central characters." "Felix Holt: Society as Protagonist." Critical Essays, pp.125-6.

10. Felix is undoubtedly the hero of Felix Holt because it is his concept of "Radicalism" that gives the novel its significant moral pattern. But Henry James argues that "as a novel with a hero there is no doubt that Felix Holt is a failure. Felix is a fragment." Nation, iii (August 1866), 127-8; reprinted in Critical Heritage, pp.274-5.

11. The reason for portraying Felix from the outside may be attributed to the influence of drama. According to George Eliot's Journal, the novel was begun on 29 March 1865. This was the time that she was occupied with the drama of the Spanish Gipsy. Gordon Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (Oxford, 1968), p.381. Fred C. Thomson also observes that the tragic conception of the Spanish Gipsy must have influenced Felix Holt. "The Genesis of Felix Holt," PMLA (1959), p.566

12. Spectator, xxxix (June 1966), p.692-3; reprinted in The Critical Heritage, p.258.

13. Most critics totally ignore Rev Lyon. F. R. Leavis does not mention him at all; Joan Bennett mentions him once and that in connection with "the flight of the young curate from impending theological disputation with Mr Lyon:" Henry James dismisses him casually as "too long-drawn, too placid." See The Great Tradition (London, 1948), pp.63-74; George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art (Cambridge, 1948), p.159; Nation, iii (August 1866), 127-8; reprinted in Critical Heritage, p.276.

14. David Carroll sees Felix and Rev Lyon in a parallel relationship. Critical Essays, pp.131-134.

15. This is a central teaching of George Eliot; it shows that her beatific expectations will be fulfilled when private and public interests merge to form a harmonious whole. The passage also resolves the problems raised in Romola and Daniel Deronda.

16. Felix here shows the contemporary male attitude towards women. See note 18.

17. Leader, vi (October 1855), 988-989; reprinted in Essays, pp.199-206.

18. Henry James, op.cit., p.275.

19. David Carroll appropriately points out that "now that he has found something 'perfect enough to be venerated' in his private relationships, there is a corresponding maturing of his iconoclams." Critical Essays, p.127.

20. In her essay, "Woman in France: Madam de Sable," George Eliot shows that the senses of love and duty are united in women. WR, lxii (October 1854), 448-473; reprinted in Essays, pp.52-81.

21. David Carroll observes that Felix Holt's suggestion of a "vision" anticipates how Esther's illusions are to be dissipated. "Unity of Daniel Deronda," Essays in Criticism (Oxford, 1959), pp.369-370.

22. Transome Court, in the view of David Carroll, provides the vision when Esther moves into it to enjoy "a rehearsal of that demeanour amongst luxuries and dignities which had often been a part of her day-dreams," but instead she comes upon Mrs Transome pacing the corridor at midnight, deserted by both son and lover. Essays in Criticism, p.370.

23. Barbara Hardy argues that Esther, like Maggie Verver, has too much to gain by her tragic ordeal. The Novels of George Eliot (London, 1959), p.63. She ignores, however, the fact that at the time of this crisis, the "presence and the love of Felix Holt was only a quivering hope, not a certainty" (xlix).

24. Esther's suffering completes the circle of suffering originating in Harold Transome's radicalism. All the major characters are shown to be suffering at the same time: Felix is languishing in jail; Harold is sorrowing because of his sonship; Mrs Transome is suffering because of her motherhood, and Esther is oppressed by the decision she has to make.

25. According to David Carroll, "The powerfully conceived Transome theme must be viewed in the larger design of Esther's psychological development through the novel; its climax in the realization of Mrs Transome's dread is the culminating factor in the integration of the heroine's character." Essays in Criticism, p.370.

26. Jerome Thale sums up the novel this way: "The principal revelation in the novel is not the mystery of Esther's parentage or the title to the Transome estate, but Esther's discovery of herself through a discovery of the world." The Novels of George Eliot (New York, 1959), p.105.

27. Barbara Hardy who argues that "the strong image is not fully endorsed by the action" is, perhaps, not concerned with the symbolic significance of the dove. Op.cit., p.63.

28. See Chapter I, footnote 4.

29. F. R. Leavis appropriately states that "Mrs Transome is a study in Nemesis." Op.cit., p.69.

30. See David Carroll's very useful discussion of the society of Felix Holt in "Felix Holt: Society as Protagonist," Critical Essays, pp.124-140.

Chapter VII
Middlemarch

1. In a letter to D'Albert Durade, George Eliot says of Middlemarch, "I wanted to give a panoramic view of provincial life." Letters, V, 241.

2. Henry James, for instance, says that "Middlemarch is a treasurehouse of details, but it is an indifferent whole." Galaxy, xv (March, 1873), 424-8; reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London, 1971), p.353; hereafter referred to as The Critical Heritage.

3. See David Carroll, "Unity Through Analogy: An Interpretation of Middlemarch," VS (June, 1959), 305-16; also Barbara Hardy, The Novels of George Eliot (London, 1959), V, 93-108.

4. The use of such analogies is, of course, not unique to Middlemarch. George Eliot uses analogies constantly to emphasize "the similarity of the human lots." But the main unifying factor in her works is a moral pattern, which is clarified by the analogies. In Middlemarch, the unifying factor is Dorothea Brooke's synthetic moral feeling which evolves in the novel in spite of her egocentred theory about her role in society.

5. In a letter to Sara Hennell, the author says that "I feel every day a greater disinclination for theories and arguments about the origin of things in the presence of all this mystery and beauty and pain and ugliness that floods one with conflicting emotions." Letters, II, 341.

6. George Eliot, Middlemarch, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Boston, 1963); all future references to text are from this edition.

7. George Eliot was describing the influence of Rousseau on her mind in a letter of 9 February 1849 to Sara

Hennell. Letters, I, 277.

8. George Eliot writes that "the writers who have most profoundly influenced me--who have rolled away the waters from their bed, raised new mountains and spread delicious valleys for me--are not in the least oracles to me--It is just possible that I may not embrace one of their opinions,--that I may wish my life to be shaped quite differently from theirs. . ." Ibid.

9. Dorothea's problems do not necessarily arise, as David Carroll insists, from her quest for knowledge, but from her efforts to suppress her emotional life. See David R. Carroll in "Unity through Analogy: An Interpretation of Middlemarch" VS (June 1959), 306.

10. The epigraph at the beginning of Chapter II shows Don Quixote's mind transforming a washerman into a knight.

11. Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.180.

12. Insisting that the mind is a system in which every element is dependent on all the rest, George Lewes goes on to assert that ideas not only have their origins in sensations, but all the "feelings" whether those of the five senses or those prompted by the systematic senses often called impulses, emotions, desires, etc., are the real motors, and that it is they, not ideas which determine actions. Problems of Life and Mind, (Boston, 1880) ii, pp.84-85. George Eliot, like Lawrence Sterne, seems to believe that "our convictions are images added to more or less sensation. These are the primitive instruments of thought." "Leaves from a Notebook" in Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), p.445; hereafter cited as Essays. Also she writes in a letter to Charles Lewes that "to receive deep impressions is the foundation of all true mental power." Letters, V, 155.

13. Casaubon's problem derives from lack of emotional attachment to his belief rather than from the error in his theory, as David Carroll seems to believe. See David Carroll, op.cit., pp.305-316.

14. George Orwell's essay which shows how language corrupts thought and vice versa is very relevant to Casaubon's case. See "Politics and the English Language" in A Collection of Essays by George Orwell (New York, 1946), pp.162-176.

15. "The Intellectual Background of the Novel: Casaubon and Lydgate" in Middlemarch: Critical Approaches, ed. B. Hardy (London, 1967), pp.28-29; hereafter cited as Critical Approaches.

16. George Eliot too has gone to Rome with preconceived ideas and, like Dorothea, has been disappointed: "Not one iota had I seen that corresponded with my preconceptions." From her disenchantment, she learns the lesson that "travelling can hardly be without a continual current of disappointment if the main object is not the enlargement of one's general life, so as to make even weariness and annoyances enter the sum of benefit." She did not "enjoy the actual vision enough" of the "world-famous objects" of Rome, and the details "impress me too feebly in the present because the faculties are not wrought up into energetic action." "Journal", Italy, 1860 in George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, ed. J. W. Cross (Edinburgh and London, 1884), V.2, p.140.

17. Barbara Hardy argues that the form of Middlemarch is incomplete because Casaubon's relationship with Dorothea is treated in terms of sexuality, in which Casaubon is shown as impotent (physically, intellectually, emotionally); but instead of presenting Will Ladislaw as his masculine foil, the potent psyche, he is presented rather in aesthetic relationship with the heroine and this is a flaw. "Implication and Incompleteness: George Eliot's Middlemarch" in The Appropriate Form: An Essay on the Novel (London, 1964), pp.125-128.

18. Evaluating the passage in the context of the "unified sensibilities," N. Feltes says that if Dorothea is really to love her husband she must cease "imagining" and must "conceive with that distinctiveness which is no longer reflection but feeling." And David Carroll calls it "a mid-wife to a viable moral philosphy," that is, a philosophy that unifies her intellectual search with her emotional hunger. Also F. R. Leavis sees it as the commencement of a "felt thought" in Dorothea. "George Eliot and the Unified Sensibility" PMLA, 79 (1964), 132-3; "Unity through Analogy," 306-307; The Great Tradition (London, 1948), p.103.

19. See note 14.

20. Gordon Haight points out that the "udder" of the quotation "is a recollection of Quarles's Emblems (i, 12), showing the world as a great breast at which only fools suck." "Test," p.156, footnote.

21. Hilda Hulme quotes from Spinoza to show that "the self-knowledge to be gained through the exercise of the human intellect" would give liberty or "release from the bondage of the irrational" which sets men's energies free. Hence Dorothea's progress in self-knowledge is an image of that progress to which the novelist would have us all attain. "The Language of the Novel: Imagery" in Critical Approaches, pp.119-120.

22. According to David Strauss, to attain the moral state "man must depart from evil, cast off the old man, crucify the flesh; a change which is essentially connected with a series of sorrows and sufferings. These the former man has deserved as a punishment, but they fall on the new, for the regenerated man, who takes them on himself, though physically and in his empirical character, as a being determined by the senses, he remains the former man; is morally, as an intellectual being, with his changed disposition, become a new man . . ." The Life of Jesus, iii, (London, 1846), p.428.

23. Hilda Hulme points out that in this cry, there is no stifling of feelings (as in Rosamond's); and the "I" is both actor and sufferer. Op.cit., p.229.

24. Dinah Morris and Esther Lyon also open their curtains when faced with moral perplexities.

25. In a letter to Alexander Main, George Eliot says, "If we live for others as well as for ourselves, we will have a sense of our worth regardless of our fortunes." Letters, V, 358.

26. Henry James complains that Ladislaw "has not the concentrated fervour essential in the man chosen by so nobly strenuous a heroine"; Leslie Stephen contends that Dorothea "hardly seems to grow wiser at the end; for . . . she takes up with a young gentleman who appears to have some good feeling, but is conspicuously unworthy of the affections of Saint Theresa." But Gerald Bullett feels that the reader must be "deeply dissatisfied with . . . her marriage to a young man who though pleasant enough is palpably not worthy of her." Galaxy (March, 1873), 424-8; reprinted in Critical Heritage, p.356; Preface to Everyman's Middlemarch, p.vii; George Eliot (London, 1947), p.228.

27. See "Woman in France: Madame De Sable," WR, lxii (October, 1854), 448-473; reprinted in Essays, p.56.

28. George Eliot says that the "intense happiness" of

her own union with Lewes "is derived in a high degree from the perfect freedom with which we each follow and declare our own impressions." Letters, III, 359.

29. In a letter to Mrs Congreve, George Eliot argues that "the most solid comfort one can fall back upon is the thought that the business of one's life . . . is to help in some small nibbling way to reduce the sum of ignorance, degradation, and misery on the face of this beautiful earth." Letters, III, 293.

30. See Barbara Hardy, The Novels of George Eliot, Chapter vii.

31. David Daiches appropriately notes that Rosamond who is really Lydgate's fate "was not the result merely of chance: she was a part of his character revenging itself on him." George Eliot: Middlemarch (London, 1963), p.29.

32. Hilda Hume makes a relevant contrast of Rosamond's dry and stifled "What shall I do?" with Dorothea's passionate cry after surprising Rosamond with Ladislaw. See note 23.

33. "The most familiar passage about Rosamond," Quentin Anderson points out significantly, "seems to be that which describes her reaction to the awful, the inconceivable fact that there is another self in the world, one which Ladislaw cherishes far more than hers." "George Eliot in Middlemarch" in From Dickens to Hardy, ed. Boris Ford (Middlesex, 1958); reprinted in Discussions of George Eliot, ed. Richard Stang (Boston, 1960), p.91.

34. Some critics, apparently influenced by the narrator's voice, think that Rosamond is regenerated by this experience. N. Feltes, particularly, argues that she "arrives at a new understanding, certainly, of her relationship with Will, and to Dorothea, but the process of gaining this understanding is one through which her whole person, intellect and feeling, is affected." "George Eliot and the Unified Sensibility" PMLA, 79 (1964), 136. But Rosamond is not depicted in the novel as being capable of intellectual life.

35. Bulstrode's God approximates to the one described by George Eliot in "Evangelical Teaching: Dr Cumming," WR lxiv (October, 1855), 436-462; reprinted in Essays, pp.158-189. George Eliot mercilessly satirizes the morality that is based on a system of rewards.

36. Bulstrode's sincere belief in God saves him from the charge of religious hypocrisy. Jerome Beaty draws the reader's attention to George Eliot's revision of the sections dealing with the banker's apparent hypocrisy in order to force the reader "to see through his eyes." The revised version, he emphasizes, calls "not for judgment but for the realization of how he could see his immoral actions in a different if admittedly somewhat murky light: it invites a willing suspension of moral righteousness. "The Text of the Novel" in Critical Approaches, p.58. What George Eliot says of Lawyer Dempster of "Janet's Repentance" is eminently applicable to Bulstrode: "My sketches both of churchmen and dissenters, with whom I am almost equally acquainted, are drawn from close observation of them in real life, and not at all from hearsay or from descriptions of novelists. . . . My irony, so far as I understand myself, is not directed against opinions--against any class of religious views--but against the vices and weaknesses that belong to human nature in every sort of clothing." Letters, II, 347-8.

37. David Carroll appropriately remarks that "the reason why Raffles offsets Bulstrode so perfectly is that he completes him." "The Externality of Fact," This Particular Web: Essays on Middlemarch, ed. Ian Adam (Toronto, 1975), p.82.

Chapter VIII
Daniel Deronda

1. Gerald Bullett argues that the novel is divided into two irreconcilable parts: "The book reads like a collaboration between two writers who are at odds with each other, the one a great artist, the other a sentimental enthusiast inflated with large vague ideas about racial continuity and expounding them will all embarrassing extravagance of the convert." George Eliot (London, 1947), p.205; F. R. Leavis also sees it as two separate works: "the two stand apart, on a large scale, in fairly neatly separable masses." The Great Tradition (London, 1948), p.93. Joan Bennett has also similar views. George Eliot (Cambridge, 1948), p.182.

2. "Daniel Deronda or Gwendolen", NCF (March, 1965) 348.

3. George Eliot herself was unhappy with "readers who cut the book into scraps. . . . I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else there" she writes. Letters, VI, 290.

4. George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, ed. Barbara Hardy (Middlesex, 1967); all future references to text are from this edition.

5. George Eliot had an experience similar to Daniel's in Italy: "Of all dreamy delights, that of floating in a gondola along the canals and out on the lagoon is surely the greatest. We were out one night on the lagoon when the sun was setting, and the wide waters were flushed with the reddened light. . . it is the sort of scene in which I could most readily forget my own existence and feel melted into the general life." "Journal," Italy, 1860. In John W. Cross, ed. George Eliot's Life as Related in Her Letters and Journals, V.2. (Edinburgh and London, 1885), p.206.

6. The meeting of Deronda and Mirah dramatizes Feuerbach's assertion that to the individual another human being "is the representative of the species, even though he is only one, for he supplies to me the want of many others, has for me a universal significance, is the deputy of mankind." The Essence of Christianity, trans. from 2nd German ed. by George Eliot (Harper Torchbook ed. New York, 1957 [1854]), p.158. B. J. Paris's remarks also show how particular relationships can serve general ends in George Eliot: "Many of George Eliot's characters become aware of their connection with the general life of society or of the species through a personal relationship with someone who is stirred by religious or social passion and has a consciousness of the wider relations of things." Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.223.

7. George Eliot strongly believes that man can only become eternal by incarnating his moral sense in others. She argues that the consolation of old age is freedom of the soul to enter into the lives of others. "But we are not shut up within our individual life," she writes to Mrs William Smith, "and it is one of the gains of advancing age that the good of young creatures becomes a more definite intense joy to us . . . we get more freedom of soul to enter into the life of others." Letters, V, p.406.

8. In response to carping criticisms of Mordecai, George Eliot says that "there has been no change [in] the point of view from which I regard life since I wrote my first fiction. . . . The principles which are at the root of my effort to paint Dinah Morris are equally at the root to paint Mordecai." Letters, VI, 318.

9. Mordecai is probably the most criticized character in George Eliot. W. J. Harvey calls him "the purest example in George Eliot's work of an almost entirely theoretical character, whose individuality is completely subordinated to his functional purpose. He shares with Dinah the difficulties that a special rhetoric impose; we find it hard, in the context of the novel, to adjust to this kind of thing." *The Art of George Eliot*, (London, 1961), pp.184-5. After attacking what he calls the Jewish part of the novel, J. P. Kearny concludes that "perhaps the final irony of *Daniel Deronda* is that its real prophecy is that the novel of the future would be written not as Mordecai had envisioned but as Gwendolen had suffered." "Time and Beauty in Daniel Deronda." *NCF* (1971), 306.

10. Mordecai's ability to think in concrete images contrasts with the vague abstractions of Casaubon, Bulstrode, and Fra Luca.

11. In *Felix Holt*, Felix insists that the relationship between the individual and society should be analogous to the one between water and steam engine: "all the schemes about voting, and districts, and annual Parliaments, and the rest, are engines, and the water or steam --the force that is to work them--must come out of human nature--out of men's passions, feelings, desires. Whether the engines will do good work or bad depends on these feelings" *Felix Holt*, Ch.xxx.

12. "It seems to me," she writes to Mrs P. Taylor, "that the soul of Christianity lies not at all in the facts of an individual life, but in the ideas of which that life was the meeting-point and the new starting point." *Letters*, IV,95.

13. Part of Maggie Tulliver's perplexity is attributed to her forfeiting "her inherited share in the hard-won treasures of thought, which generations of painful toil have laid up for the race of men." *The Mill on the Floss*, Bk.IV, Ch.iii. In "The Progress of the Intellect," a nature that is rooted in the past is compared with "a mighty river, which, in its long windings through unfrequented regions, gathers mineral and earthy treasures only more effectually to enrich and fertilize the cultivated valleys and busy cities which form the habitation of man." *WR*, liv (January, 1851), 353-368; reprinted in *Essays*, p.29.

14. "Unity of Daniel Deronda," *Essays in Criticism* (Oxford, 1959), p.378.

15. Fedalma's farewell to Don Silva, "The Spanish Gypsy" in George Eliot's Works Vol.xi (Blackwood, Edinburgh and London, 1906), p.372.

16. This is a reference to the wider effects of the American Civil War. George Eliot was very much concerned with the moral implications of the war to the world in general. In a letter of 15 February 1862 to Madame Bodichon about the war, she says "My best consolation is that an example on so tremendous a scale of the need for the education of mankind through the affections and sentiments as a basis for true development, will have a strong influence on all thinkers, and be a check to the arid, narrow antagonism which in some quarters is held to be the only form of liberal thought." Letters, IV, 13. George Eliot believes that such affections and sentiments are nourished in family or ethnic settings, and hence Daniel's mission to revive the sentiments of Zionism is a movement that will be beneficial to mankind in general.

17. "Time and Beauty in Daniel Deronda," NCF, (1971), 291.

18. Arthur Donnithorne, Captain Wybrow, Godfrey Cass, Mrs Transome, Tito Melema, and Bulstrode looked forward to chance as a means of resolving their moral conflicts.

19. Music is a moral thought that is formed within before it lives outside the musician. "A College Breakfast-Party." Poems: George Eliot Works, Vol.xi (Warwick ed. Edinburgh and London, 1906), p.628.

20. F. R. Leavis, op.cit., p.121.

21. George Levine, "Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot," PMLA, Vol.77, No.3 (June, 1962), 268-79; reprinted in British Victoria Literature, ed. Shiv K. Kumar (New York, 1969), p.223.

22. According to Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot was influenced by Feuerbach's idea of love which takes preeminence over everything else. Feuerbach defines marriage "as the free bond of love--is sacred in itself, by the very nature of the union which is therein effected. That alone is a religious marriage, which corresponds to the essence of marriage--of love." The Essence of Christianity, trans. Marian Evans (1854), p.47; reprinted in Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (Oxford, 1968), p.137.

23. In George Eliot, the conscious changing of garments

seems to symbolize a change of mind. Dorothea Brooke and Mrs Bulstrode, in Middlemarch, change their garments at the moment of crises. Chapters lxxx and lxxiv.

24. What distinguishes Gwendolen's wish for her antagonist's death from Bulstrode's is that the former's wish stems from a defensive instinct to protect herself, while the latter's is a calculated way of escape from the clutches of nemesis.

25. Albert R. Cirillo makes the appropriate comment that Daniel's departure was essential to Gwendolen's salvation. "By devoting himself to a larger cause, Daniel leaves Gwendolen, thus asserting a final mastery over her and forcing her to independence from him which she is ready to accept." "Salvation in Daniel Deronda: the Fortunate Overthrow of Gwendolen Harleth," Literary Monographs, vi (Wisconsin, 1967) p.204.

Part II, Chapter IX
Moral Dynamics

1. Letters, IV, 364.

2. The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1953), p.267.

3. Ibid.

4. George Eliot in "The Natural History of German Life," WR, lxvi (July, 1856), 51-79; reprinted in Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York, 1963), p.287; hereafter cited as Essays.

5. Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965), p.71.

6. "Notes on Form in Art 1868" in Essays, p.433.

7. Introduction to Middlemarch (Riverside ed. Boston, 1956) xvi.

8. Letters, I, 162.

9. In Romola, George Eliot argues that the spirit of fellow-feeling rises from "the sympathetic impulses that need no law, but rush to the deed of fidelity and pity as inevitably as the brute mother shields her young from the attack of hereditary enemy" (Ch.ix).

10. George Eliot seems to accept Lewes's position that

sympathy and vision are both dependent upon experience: "Unless we have had an experience much like that which another person is undergoing, we cannot perceive and share the states of feeling signified by that person's behavior. Suffering humanizes." Problems of Life and Mind, Vol.i (Boston, 1880), p.153.

11. B. J. Paris, op.cit., p.70.

12. Letters, VI, 116.

13. See Chapter xviii, "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!"

14. I share Dorothy Van Ghent's view that what appears coincidental may actually be the cause-effect product of moral dynamics. "But in a universe that is nervous throughout, a universe in which nervous ganglia stretch through both people and their external environment, so that a change in the human can infect the currents of the air and sea, events and confrontations that seem to abrogate the laws of physical mechanics can logically be brought about. In this sense, the apparent coincidences in Dickens actually obey a causal order--not of physical mechanics but of moral dynamics." Op.cit., p.132.

15. The Novels of George Eliot (Oxford, 1959), p.116.

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